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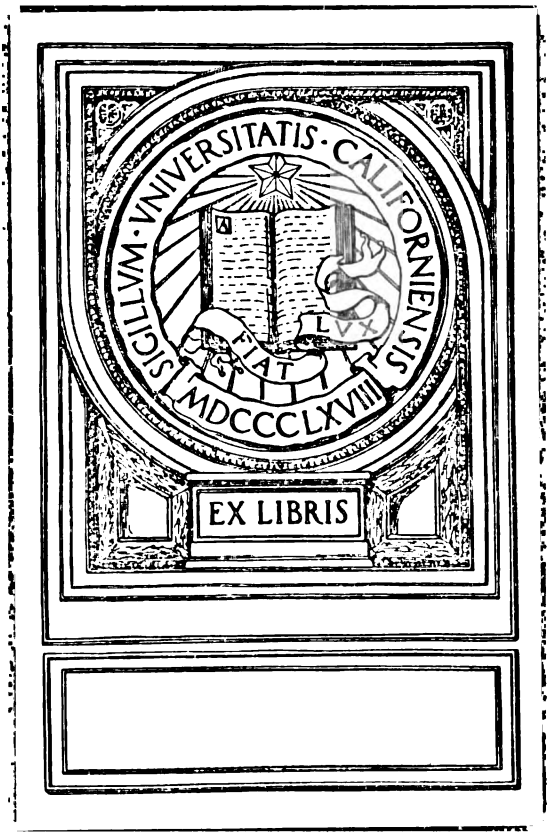

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THE

CHURCH OF GOD;

OR,

Essays upon its Names and Titles;

AND

UPON OTHER SUBJECTS.

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Searle

The Church of God:

OR,

ESSAYS

ON

VARIOUS NAMES AND TITLES,

GIVEN TO

The Church,

IN THE

HOLY SCRIPTURES:

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

SOME PAPERS

ON OTHER SUBJECTS.

LIBRARY
A. Searle

Author of Mar. Searle &c.

Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.—*Psalm* lxxxvii. 3.
The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.—*Matt.* xvi. 18.

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THE

CHURCH OF GOD,

&c. &c.

CHURCH.

AS it is confessedly necessary, in all human sciences, to settle the precise sense of the terms used in them, in order to obtain an accurate knowledge of their several subjects; so is this rule more especially proper, though perhaps less attended to, in divinity, and in the word or revelation of God, which is the only sure foundation of divinity, and which, particularly in one of its languages, has a peculiarity of allusion, and precision of expression, not to be met with in any other book or language in the world. The knowledge of the original terms, and due consideration of their usage, would not only afford a just key to the stores of divine erudition, sufficiently ample, even in this present life, to reward the study and pursuit of the truth-seeking mind; but would also defend it from a thousand errors and false principles, by a direct manifestation of their fallacy, and an almost immediate detection of their pernicious tendency, to the understanding and the heart at once. Without it, people not only lose a very high satisfaction

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and delight, but must unavoidably take a great deal upon trust, and are therefore neither so good judges of what they profess to believe, nor so capable of defending it, in many respects, from attacks, formed either by the ignorance or the enmity of adversaries. And it may be believed in candor, that if some persons, hostile to divine revelation, could really have read their bibles, without the help of others; they would have found many, if not all their objections obviated, and truth itself exhibited in her most perfect form; commanding at least their respect, if not, for their own happiness, a more entire attention. At any rate, it is neither just nor liberal to censure a book, which a man is unable to read. A clown, all English, would be esteemed a very incompetent scholiast upon *Virgil* or *Homer*.

And yet it must be owned, that though a man hath attained the language of the bible, and hath acquired a key to much treasure; he may still want the master-key, which only can unlock the interior depository of the most precious stores; or, in other words, in order to attain *for himself* the most interesting matters in the sacred volume, it is necessary for him to have a better tuition than his own, or that of any creatures; lest otherwise, he fall into the case of those, who are *ever learning*, and *never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*. He will, however, be probably preserved from many gross heterodoxies, from many anti-christian absurdities, and from the effects of many *perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth*, by the verbal knowledge and literal study of the book and its subjects; as might be instanced at this time in several

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several valuable persons, who seem to have obtained what they hold of truth, and to have been preserved from the reigning errors, in no other way. It is a great satisfaction to see people go thus far: it would be a matter of exceeding joy to find them clearly in the strait and narrow road, without doubt or wavering, owning and enjoying the full grace and glory of the gospel of Christ.

The terms of Scripture, the very names of persons and things in God's own language, contain in them the doctrines and principles of the most momentous truths; not with metaphysical subtleties, not for logical deductions, as in common books, not for acute or wordy reasonings; but by authoritative communication and express declaration from God himself, commanding assent with resentment in case of unbelief, *who spake by his Spirit at sundry times and in divers manners to the fathers by the prophets.* The words used, therefore, do not stand for abstract speculations or lead to fine-spun theories, to be excogitated by us; but imply living, interesting, eternal realities. They were not intended to convey notions, for the corrupt investigation of man's doubtful and doubting reason, or (what the Scripture calls) his *darkened understanding;* but for the explicit conveyance of positive truths—of truths so important, as to contain in them the interests of the human being to all eternity—of truths so needful, that the human being cannot be happy without them either here or hereafter. For the enjoyment of these he is to *yield the obedience of faith,* or to give absolute credit to the veracity of his Maker; whose αὐτὸς ἐφὴ, or direct instruction, it is neither poor-spirited nor absurd implicitly to receive; but, on the contrary, arro-

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gant and presumptuous to reject, only because, from the weakness of human intellection, it is not in all cases possible, and especially without some previous growth in grace, to comprehend or explain it.

As a man is reputed a scholar, in proportion as he knows *words* and *things*, and words chiefly as leading to the knowledge of things; so a professor of religion is to be reckoned a true divine, or indeed a real Christian, only as he understands the *terms* and *language* of divine truth, and the *things* revealed or signified by those terms; all of which are explicit and clear, as coming from God himself, and sweet and powerful by whomsoever they are truly received, both in doctrine and experience.

Upon the subject-matter of this treatise, which considers many of the NAMES or TITLES, given in the Scriptures to those whom God has declared to be the objects of his favor, it seems proper to say, That it is the author's general intention to show from these names, that they not only relate to the *persons* of those objects of divine favor, but also (agreeably to what has now been premised) to certain *doctrines* or *principles*, which explain the means, the order, the privileges, which the divine Wisdom hath used in their behalf, or conferred upon them, and which, for the information and comfort of their minds, God devised and ordained the titles and terms to express and declare. The name which God gives must be right; and the sense, or doctrine of the name, must as necessarily be true. To take away the meaning of the name, would be to destroy God's purpose in giving it: and to allow the meaning (it may be seen, as we go along) will be to allow all the leading or essential principles, which concern man's present peace and eternal salvation.

Having

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Having suggested these few reflections, which may serve as an introduction to the purpose of the following papers; we will now consider one of the most conspicuous and comprehensive titles which God hath bestowed upon his redeemed, in the word

CHURCH.

THE etymological sense of this English name *church*, from the Greek Κυριη οικια or κυριακη οικια (whence *Kirk*, *Kerke*,) is the *Lord's house*, or house set apart for the Lord's worship. It is somewhat more than the *proseuchæ*, which were sometimes small structures, and sometimes places in the open air, appointed for prayer; but differs little, as to the intention, from the *synagogues* among the Jews, which were large and convenient *buildings*, appropriated to the reading of the law and the offering up of public devotions. But the word, though it frequently denotes the *building*, is also used to signify the persons assembling in it for the purpose abovementioned: hence, by an easy figure, the *congregation* became synonimous with *church*. In this sense also, by a more antient usage, the word עדה, which literally means an *assembly*, sometimes implies the same with קהל, a *particular set called out of a general bulk*, and so distinguished from them. In short, the word *church* is applied to many senses. Sometimes it is used to denote the general body of men, good and bad, professing Christianity; sometimes a particular nation of the same

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profession;* sometimes the pastors of the church in convocation or synod; sometimes the people, in distinction from the ministers; sometimes the place, where they meet to worship; sometimes a very few persons indeed; a family in a house; or, if we may follow *Tertullian*, three laymen, met for worship, may make a church;† sometimes God's own spiritual people on earth, or church truly militant against the powers of evil and darkness; and sometimes the assembly of just men made perfect, or church triumphant, in heaven.‡

But the great idea of the word *church*, to which all the other senses only minister or are subordinate, must be taken from the words קהל and Εκκλησια, which primarily signify *persons specially* CALLED OUT OF *or* CHOSEN *from the common mass of the world or people for a particular purpose:* and these words, applied to the children of God, denote that *they are a people peculiarly appointed and called of God, out of the bulk of mankind, to be his own portion and to obtain everlasting salvation, by the means which he has appointed and affords them, according to the good pleasure of his will.* In this view,

* Thus the Church of *England*, of *Scotland*, &c. So the modern Jews distinguish between their Church of *Spain*, and that of *Germany*.

† *Ubi tres, ecclesia est, licet laici.* TERTUL. Exhort ad cast. See HOOKER. *Eccl. Pol.* B. iii. § 1. Our Lord justifies this assertion, by assuring his people, that *where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midst of them.* And it is not doubted, but that a church of Christ was walking to *Emmaus*, when our Lord joined himself to two of his disciples upon the road thither and preached to them.

‡ The learned reader may see much upon the various usages of the word *Church* in SELDEN *de Synedr. Hebr.* l. i. c. 9.

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the word *Church* doth not specify the *number* or *proportion*, but the *peculiarity* and the *persons*, of the Lord's redeemed; be they more or fewer, in contradistinction from the men of the world. Christ *loved this church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word, that he* (as the man high-priest) *might present it to himself* (in Jehovah) *a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing* (like outward churches or mixed congregations of men) *but that it should be holy, and without blemish.**

In this view of the word church, the apostle calls the brethren of his own time, *partakers of the* HEAVENLY CALLING,† which, in another place, he terms *the* HIGH CALLING *of God in Christ Jesus.*‡ He speaks often of God's *calling* or *vocation*, in this particular view, as an act of God's free will and power, and not man's; and hence *calling and election*, which are put together by another apostle,§ are names nearly signifying in effect the same thing. His *effectual calling* proceeds from his own *election*, and is the manifested confirmation of it. This the apostle shews very remarkably: *ye see your* CALLING, *brethren; how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are* called. *But God hath* CHOSEN, *or* ELECTED, *the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath* CHOSEN *the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God*

* Eph. v. 25, 26, 27.
† Heb. iii. 1.
‡ Phil. iii. 14.
§ 2 Pet. i. 10.

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CHOSEN, *yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence.** There could be no reason for the *choice* and the *calling*, but God's own free grace and determination; for the subjects of his choice were altogether unlikely and unworthy. There is also a *general calling* by the word, as there is a *general church*, to all sorts and of all sorts; but this is not the *particular* and *energetic* call, which the Holy Spirit gives, in the use of the word, to his own people, when he graciously quickens them from spiritual death. The former is appointed to *men*, who are to go forth *into all the world* with the unlimited commission of *preaching the gospel to every creature*, which is their business, without regarding distinction of persons: the latter is reserved in *God's* own hand, who *knoweth whom he hath chosen*, and to whom he will effectuate the word preached, distinguishing and selecting them from the mass of the world. Thus *many are* CALLED; *but, few,* CHOSEN.

Of these the Jews of old were ordained to be a striking figure, preaching the awful and important truth before us.† Thus said *Moses* to them: *thou art a holy (or separate) people unto* Jehovah *thy* Alehim: Jehovah *thy* Alehim *hath chosen thee to be* (to have a particular existence as) *a special people unto himself, above all the people that are upon the face of the earth.* Jehovah *did*

* Cor. i. 26—29.

† It is to be regretted, that this great and most important *figure*, which denotes *who* and *what* is properly *the church* of God, is omitted by the excellent and learned author of a late valuable work, *On the figurative Language of the Scriptures.*

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not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people (for ye were the fewest of all people) but BECAUSE Jehovah *loved* (or would love) *you, and because he would keep the oath, &c.** Hence they are called, *the people whom* Jehovah *purchased as a peculiar treasure unto him above all people.*† These were so on a *conditional* covenant, which, as a figure, was to pass away; but the spiritual church or people upon an *unconditional* covenant, which, as the substance intended, was to remain for ever. The one covenant, therefore, was called *old*, as relative to a former or forerunning people, who were, *like it, to be taken away;* but the other is called *new*, because it was to be revealed in due time from under the shadow of the *old*, and to be ever-new, as is the perpetual song of the blessed, or *everlasting*. The terms of this new covenant are, I [Jehovah] WILL *put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and* WILL BE *their Alehim, and* THEY SHALL BE *my people.*‡

The apostle applies this to the spiritual or redeemed people, both Jews and Gentiles. He says, that *the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and* PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF A PECULIAR PEOPLE *zealous of good works.*§ The purification was by the blood of JESUS, as the Jews were typically purified by sacrifice under the law, prefiguring this very mercy. *For this cause* (says the apostle) *he is the Mediator of the new Testa-*

* Deut. vii. 6, &c. † Exod. xv. 16. xix. 5.
‡ Jer. xxxi. 33. § Tit. ii. 14.

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ment (or covenant,) *that by means of death (i. e.* his death) *for the redemption* (or perfect clearing away) *of the transgressions under the first testament, they who are* CALLED [*i. e.* the spiritual church] *might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.** From what has been said, it may appear, that the church of Christ is twofold; the one that outward and visible church, which professes divine truth and offers public worship; the other that spiritual assemblage of persons in all ages, who constitute the mystic body of Christ, and are chosen and called to this high privilege by the Father and Holy Spirit. They are not, however, *two* churches totally different from each other in *members;* but the latter is raised out of the former, as the kernel out of the shell, and is *the church* emphatically, to which both what is called the visible church and the world itself do only minister and subserve. This is that *salt of the earth,* which keeps it, for a time appointed, from all the consequences of corruption. There is indeed another church (if it may deserve the name) called by the wise man *the congregation of the dead,* (Prov. xxi. 16.) apostates, rebels, or giants (as the word signifies) in their own wisdom and strength; such as were those we read of in Gen. vi. 4. and Ecclus. xxiii. 4. These follow *Cain* and *Balaam* for the earth and its rewards, and have no spiritual alliance whatever with the Israel of God.

The spiritually and effectually CALLED of God are the CHOSEN of God; and called, because they are chosen. Thus *chosen, called,* and *faithful,* they con-

* Heb. ix. 15.

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stitute *the one holy Church of God*,* in the sublime sense; and are therefore said, what can be said truly of no others, to be IN *God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ*.† They are IN God by a mystical and spiritual union with the person of their Redeemer, by whom alone they have this wonderful access by one Spirit to the Father.

The ark of *Noah* shadowed forth the church in the world, selected and preserved from general destruction, borne up over the waves and oppositions of ungodly men and evil spirits, and landed safely at last upon God's holy mountain.

The ark of the covenant, resting in the most holy place, described in a figure the church in glory, *covered* by Christ her only propitiation, and cloathed with the

* To this effect is the sense of a most learned defender of the church of *England*. "That church of Christ, which we properly term his body mystical, can be but *one;* neither can that one be *sensibly* discerned by any man, inasmuch as the parts thereof are some in heaven already with Christ, and the rest that are on earth (albeit their natural persons be visible) we do not discern under this property whereby they are truly and infallibly of that body. Only our *minds*, by intellectual conceit, are able to apprehend, that such a real body there is; a body collective, because it containeth an huge multitude; a body mystical, because the mystery of their conjunction is removed altogether from sense. Whatsoever we read in scripture concerning the endless love, and the saving mercy, which God sheweth towards his church; the only proper subject thereof is *this* church. Concerning *this* flock it is, that our Lord and Saviour hath promised, *I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands*." HOOKER. Eccl. Pol. B. iii. §. 1.

† 1 Thess. i. 1.

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pure gold of his perfect righteousness. As *Noah's* ark resembled the church militant, being agitated here upon the troublesome waves of the world; so the other ark exhibited the church triumphant in the *rest of God*, and therefore received its name from the *exultation* and *joy*, which the saints in glory pour forth before the throne of the Highest.

Out of the ark of *Noah*, there was no escape or deliverance: Out of the church of Christ, or not being a member of it, there will be found at the last no salvation.

The outward and visible church, with its outward and visible signs, was instituted for the collection and instruction of those, who, by the means and calling used in it, compose, when completed in one body, that inward and invisible church, which receives, through the signs, the inward and spiritual grace. All others, "being void of a lively faith," though they use the signs, find no "wholesome effect or operation" from them, "nor are they partakers of Christ in any wise," but rather fall into "condemnation" thereby.

The outward church hath the means of grace; but the spiritual church only hath grace itself and the end of grace. God hath appointed the one as a step to the other: and, by being partaker of the last, the Christian knows how to estimate and be thankful for the first. He will pray and endeavour for its extension and support, in the establishment of its ordinances and ministers, that God's sheep, wandering in the world, may be brought into the fold, and that their "number may be accomplished."

The visible church consists, and necessarily must consist

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consist in this world, of good and bad, and probably at all times of more bad than good: but the invisible church of Christ, gathered from the visible church universal, and from the beginning of man to the end of time, is made up wholly and solely of true believers, who, though they may differ in their proportions, have all the same grace, and one, common, undivided, interest in the salvation of Jesus Christ.

The outward church hath often been rent with factions and schisms, and defiled by errors, through *the cunning craftiness of men*, who *lie in wait to deceive*, either for *vain glory* or for *filthy lucre's sake*. These pretend reason, and liberty, and unlimited discussion; forgetting, that where God hath already given the *data* or principles, man is bound to implicit consent, whatever conduct he may espouse in ordinary matters; and therefore the result is, first *doubt*, then *presumption*, then *error*, and, lastly, open *disobedience*. The soundest visible churches have ever had, more or less of these "eye-sores and blemishes in their continual attendants about the service of God's sanctuary—who live by religion, and are, for recompence in fine, the death of the nurse that feedeth them."* Such was the case and ruin of the churches in *Asia*; and such of the Jewish church itself. Perhaps, no visible church ever was or will be so surely or effectually ruined, as by the false doctrine and gross misconduct of its own rulers and members. One enemy within the walls is worse and more dangerous than fifty foes, who attack from without. But the

* Hooker. Eccl. Pol. B. v. § 81.

inward

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inward church is preserved, in the arms and bosom of Christ, from the danger of these calamities. She doth not, she cannot, finally and essentially *err;* Christ himself hath pronounced it to be *impossible:** and the *gates of hell shall never prevail against her;* for the part on earth is brought forward and *kept by the power of God himself through faith unto salvation;* and the part in heaven is certainly delivered from the very approaches of mistake and of evil.

The outward church of Christ upon earth shall remain, as the scaffold for the building, till every member of the spiritual church shall be gathered in or fitted for its place; and then *the head-stone shall be brought forth with shoutings of, Grace, Grace, unto it.* Then shall *all these* present *things,* having no purpose for which they can remain, *be dissolved;* and in *one hour*† of that *day of the Lord which will come as a thief in the night,* astonishing a thoughtless and giddy world as the flood of *Noah, shall the heavens, being on fire, pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein,* all the cares, labors, contrivances, and hopes of men, *shall be burnt up.*‡ Thus spake the Holy Ghost by the apostle; and long before he revealed the same, in his call to the children of God, by the prophet. *Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heaven shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell*

* Matt. xxiv. 24. with John x. 27, 28.
† Rev. xviii. 10, 19. ‡ 2 Pet. iii. 10—12.

therein

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*therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.**

How desirous are mortals of continuance? how eager for the very shadow of immortality?—for a *continuance*, even in this state of misery and corruption:—for an *immortality*, supposed to be possible only in the future thought and opinions of dying men!—for the useless immortality of an empty *name!* But alas! these very same mortals; how indifferent are they to God's own promise and assurance of an *eternal inheritance* and *abiding*, and of a name, *an everlasting name that shall not be cut off;* which stands in the love and plaudit of innumerable beings, of the highest rank, holiness, and understanding in the whole creation, and even of God himself; and concerning that *immortality*, which consists in the unalterable enjoyment of every perfection without end! This may be wisdom, at least they act as if it were wisdom, in their own esteem; but in the sight of God, and proportionally in the view of every mind enlightened and alive, it is madness, melancholy, and misery; verging towards and at last plunged in a gulph of unchangeable perpetuity beyond redemption. If we would see one of the most striking instances of the infatuation of sin, one of the most forcible proofs of the depth of the human fall; here it is. A creature, capable of the enjoyment of God and eternal happiness, deceived, besotted, and carried away from it, and also from every intrinsic good here upon earth, into the dregs of evil; *seeking death in the fluctuating vanity*† and palpable

* Isaiah li. 6. † Prov. xxi. 6.

errors

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errors of life, and boldly spurning at those very things, which alone can answer the purpose of his being and make him happy! He wanders wide through the world for that peace and safety, which no wanderer, as such, ever found. *Satan* and *Cain* have *gone to and fro in the earth, and walked up and down in it*,* under the curse of being *fugitives and vagabonds*,† but never attained *satiety* or *rest*; and the same may be said of all, that follow them. In the ark, in the city, in the church, of God, must men enter in spirit and in truth; or the world and their own bosoms, were there no enemies beside, will be leading them down from woe to woe, till they enter the dark and hopeless caverns of death eternal.

Reader! Art thou in this church of the living God?—I ask not, whether thou art of any particular denomination or outward church, so called among men; No, my aim is higher. Thou mayest be a member of any particular Christian society, enjoying the soundest and most apostolic form; thou mayest be esteemed for thy zeal, thy strictness, and for thine whole outward deportment; thou mayest make a good profession too before many witnesses; and yet, after all this, and much more, not be a member of Christ's spiritual church, or a Christian indeed. It is even a possible case, that thou mayest be a minister or preacher to others, and be enabled even to work miracles in nature and grace (for *Judas* and others have done these) and yet *be in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity*. Thy heart may be

* Job. i. 7. † Gen. iv. 12.

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unchanged; thy spirit may be loaded with pride, malice, and every evil temper; thy affections may be fixed upon self or the creatures; notwithstanding much apparent zeal, knowledge, or reputation. Thou mayest also change thy sect, without being renewed in thyself; and thou mayest hold any or every form of godliness, and for many years, but all the while be a stranger to its power. Thou mayest write books in proof of the true church, and be the instrument of leading others into the true profession; but be in thyself, notwithstanding, only *sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.* It is hard to say, what thou mayest be; what gifts, attainments, admiration, and successes, thou mayest receive or procure; yet all without *following Christ in the regeneration,* and without being united to him in the sacred fellowship of his Spirit. It is certainly possible to be much in show, and nothing in reality: and *how much,* it is worth both thy labor and mine to search deeply and inquire. The sincere soul, with fear and trembling, seeks the discussion: the hypocrite, with a careless or presumptuous confidence, abhors and shuns it.

O what a dismal case it is for a man to be a stranger to his own self! How deplorable, that he should not know the motives and machinations of an evil heart of unbelief; that he should call evil good, and good evil; and that he should fancy himself to be well enough, upon the very precipice of death everlasting! What an hardening deceitfulness is there in sin! What an unfeeling stupefaction doth it occasion in every sinful heart! No law, no judgements, no threatnings, no chastise-

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ments, on the one hand; no gospel, no promises, no mercies, no glories, on the other; are sufficient, of themselves, to awaken a poor sinner from this sensual sleep of lost and ruined nature. Thine Omnipotence alone, thou blessed HEAD of the church; the powers of thine eternal Godhead, only, can quicken into spiritual life, the wretched, sunk, and helpless sons of men. When thou speakest, in thy word, *Arise, from the dead;* thy Spirit rushes rapidly to the inmost recesses of the soul, and raises it up with vigor from the mental grave. Who can *resist thy will;* who frustrate thy gracious designs; who retain him in bondage, to whom thou impartest liberty and peace?—Lord, all hearts, all hands, all wisdom, all things, are thine; and to thee alone be ascribed *the kingdom, the power, and the glory.*

And, Lord, who and what am I, or what is any other man, that thou shouldest make me, or him, a living member of thine holy and dearly united body! I have done nothing, I could do nothing, to deserve or obtain this, in my fallen state, being altogether wicked and weak. It was thy mercy, thy tender mercy alone, which visited my soul, and gave me eyes to see, and a heart to desire, the things that make for my peace. It is the same merciful power, which supports and carries me on from day to day. I do not leave thee, only because thou dost not, in tender faithfulness, leave or forsake me. Without thine help, I should droop in a moment. O make me sensible, always sensible, of this my weakness and manifold infirmities, that I may never trust to myself, but that *thy power may rest upon me.* Thus keep me in the fellowship of thy church, of thy

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thy brethren (as thou hast deigned to call them) and mine; and enable me, with the deepest humility and gratitude, to remember the spiritual dignity thou hast conferred, and to walk, in the utmost degree, *worthy of the high vocation wherewith I am called.* In this way, by thy continual help, may I endeavour to make my *calling and election sure.* And when all that I am to do, and all that is to be done in me, is completed according to thy will; O receive me up to thyself, my Lord, my life, my God; and let me see thee face to face, according to thy word, which I have so often longed spiritually to see while in these regions of dulness and sorrow!—My soul exults in the bright expectation of its full interest in that great truth, which from age to age is fulfilling, and finally shall be accomplished, that the GLORIOUS CHURCH, which my dear Redeemer hath *purchased,* he will, as High-priest, or Man-mediator, *present to himself,* in JEHOVAH, *without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;* yea, *holy, unblameable, and unreproveable in his sight;* and that I, a poor unworthy sinner by nature, but a member of Christ by grace, shall *stand in my lot* also *at the end of the days,* and enjoy my Lord and my portion amongst his redeemed for ever.

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TABERNACLE.

THE literal sense of this word is, a *dwelling* or *habitation;* and it is peculiarly the name of that remarkable building or tent, which according to God's command was raised by *Moses*, and carried through the wilderness with the *Israelites* to *Canaan*, as the token of God's residence with them.

The *purpose* of it was expressed in the command; *Let them* [the children of *Israel*] *make me a* SANCTUARY (a place of peculiar holiness) *that I may* DWELL *amongst them;* wherein I may vouchsafe my *Shecinah*, my immediate presence to or among them: *According to all that I shall cause thee to see, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.**

The whole structure, therefore, had a particular sense in it, and exhibited, to the spiritual discernment of those that were *Israelites* indeed, several important truths; some of which are obvious to the spiritual discernment of God's people to this day, and were designed to be so. The several parts of this structure preached Christ and his goodness in a mystery; and they *prophesied of him* † till he came, who was the great *minister of the true Tabernacle* [that which the other only shadowed forth, but had no reality in itself] *which the Lord pitched, and not man.*‡

* Exod. xxv. 8, 9, † Matt. xi. 13.
‡ Heb. viii. 2.

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The tabernacle, therefore, of *Moses* was called also a *tent*, and was covered by one, intimating, that it was to pass away and to cease, when Christ should have accomplished the whole purpose, which it prefigured, and should have terminated his salvation in an everlasting temple. This last temple, for that reason, is called, *the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven*;* i. e. the final accomplishment and manifestation in heaven, of what both the tabernacle and the temple testified and led to upon earth.

It is highly derogatory to the wisdom and truth of the Most High to suppose, as some have dared to suppose, that this fabric of the tabernacle and all its appurtenances and œconomy, so carefully delineated by God himself, so expressly wrought under his divine tuition, and so exactly ordered in all its parts and applications, had neither certain nor sublime meanings in it; but was only a colluvies, a mass of idle ceremonies, borrowed from heathens, and calculated merely to soothe the idolatrous prejudices, or to employ the idle attention, of the *Israelites* in their passage through the wilderness.† But the Lord speaks otherwise, and calls them HIS *charge* [a matter to be closely, carefully, constantly, observed and considered, as the Hebrew word imports] HIS *sta-*

*Rev. xv. 5.

† *Apostolus ait:* litera enim occidit, spiritus vivificat. *Si enim hoc tantum volumus intelligere, quod sonat in litera; aut parvam aut prope nullam ædificationem de divinis lectionibus capiemus. Illa enim* OMNIA *quæ recitantur, typus erant et imago futurorum. In Judæis enim figurata; in nobis, gratia Dei donante, completa sunt.* AUG. Serm. 201. de tempore.

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tutes, HIS *judgements, and* HIS *commandments*:* which were to be *laid up in* his people's *hearts,* and in their *souls;* which they were to *teach,* and to *speak* of, when they were *sitting in the house,* or *walking by the way,* when they *were lying down* or *rising up,* that their *days might be increased,* not merely in *number,* but with the true increase of happiness and divine enjoyment, *as the days of heaven upon earth.*† They were full of those *secrets of wisdom,* that *hidden mystery,* which God only *explains* to the soul, and shows to it, that both his works and word are *two-fold in existence,* having an outward use and a spiritual signification.‡

The tabernacle signified both Christ *personal* and Christ *mystical;* in other words, it prefigured both *himself* and his body the *church.* It was therefore anointed with oil, and all its utensils; and thus made figuratively *holy.* Christ and his people take their very name, from that *holy unction,* which the divine Spirit hath poured forth upon them, and by which they are for ever consecrated unto God.

It denoteth Christ *personal,* as the particular being *in whom* DWELLETH *all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,* or, as in one *body,* or eminent *place;* whence the word *place* § was anciently applied to Jehovah in our nature. Thus

* Deut. xi. 1. † Deut. xi. 18—21.

‡ Job xi. 6. בפלים לתושיה, This תושיה is a name for that *Wisdom,* which sees things *as they are,* and *for what* they are *intended.* Prov. ii. 7.

§ מקום, As a place is a *point,* in which the action of a being is determined; so the word is applied to Christ, as that person, in whom the purposes and power of Jehovah, respecting salvation

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Thus the blasphemy, mentioned against *God and his tabernacle*,* is understood to be against God and his Christ, who, as the *Word*, or revealer of God, *was made flesh*, became *manifest in the flesh*, and *dwelt*, ἐσκήνωσεν, taber-

tion, solely concentrate, and by whom they are effectuated. He is to be understood in this name, as the center, point, place, or instrument, of all divine authority, exaltation, and glory; and the word seems to be used to give our feeble intellect an idea of the great condescension of that divine Person, who will be found of his people in a limited spot, the human nature of *Jesus;* though, as to his divine nature, he is illimitable, being in every place, and above it, incomprehensibly. Thus *Jehovah* made him known to *Moses: Behold, the* PLACE *with me.* And the representation ordained to be made of this place, where God would meet with and communicate with his people, was called, מקום רגלי *the place of my feet*, or הדם רגלי *footstool*, the *rest of my feet.* See Psalm cxxxii. 7. Isa. lx. 13. This was the כפרת, or *mercy seat*, which was at the feet of the cherubim, or *throne of glory*, where JEHOVAH only would be *found*, where he *rested* for salvation, and to which all the true worshippers of old (as to the very life and point of all their service) turned their faces from all parts of the world. This כפרת is rendered by the apostle *propitiation*, and directly referred to Christ.

The rabbins themselves understood by PLACE, the essence of God, and the means of contemplating it. MAIMON. *More Nev.* P. i. c. 8.

The word of God speaks after the manner of men, and employs figures from sensible objects to convey notices of spiritual things. Thus, *place*, *height*, *depth*, &c. are used to communicate ideas of what is infinitely above the limits expressed by those terms. In like manner, we may observe concerning the *life* of the creatures, that it consists of a *series of reiterated acts*, comprehended in their *time* and *place;* but the *life* of JEHOVAH, which includes all things and can be included by none, is (speaking with the humblest reverence) one *immanent*, or *continued act*, infinite and perpetual,

* Rev. xiii. 6.

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tabernacled *among us.** He was *the name*, and that *cloud of glory*, placed in the church of old, who manifested his presence by a thousand signs and tokens; that *Jehovah*, who was to *come* and *dwell in the midst* of the church in the latter day; and that temple and tabernacle *not made with hands*, resembled by those, which God had sketched out for men to raise.

The tabernacle also denoted Christ *mystical*, that is, his body the church, in union with him the head. And this tabernacle, made up of various parts and members, signified his people of various countries, times, capacities, and designations. Thus, in that memorable chapter of *Ezekiel*, the promise runs; *My tabernacle shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know, that I Jehovah do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst*

perpetual, extending through every atom of the creation, and imparting motion, and the powers of motion, to the whole. He is all-perception, all-intellect, all-power; every where present, in every moment. More truly than what has been said, respecting the human soul energizing the body; the Lord is "All in all, and all in every part." We know, within our own frames, that the finest point which can be conceived, impressed upon any, the most distant member, is instantly perceived by the mind, through the *continuity* which obtains in the structure of the whole. So the Almighty, in a far sublimer sense than can be expressed by words or conceived by created thought, pervades, perceives, comprehends, every action, whether corporal or spiritual, of all his creatures throughout his creation, instantly, distinctly, abidingly, infinitely; because all and every part are within Him, and by Him, and through Him, as their first cause, their constant support, and their ultimate end. In a word; *He is the fulness, which filleth all in all.*

* John i. 14. To keep up the memorial of this, when they entered

*midst of them for evermore.** Our Lord explains this in his last prayer.† The Psalmist also prophesies of the church; *there is a river* [the Spirit of life] *the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.*‡ The outward tabernacle *was a figure for the time then present;* and it was a figure representing *a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building,*§ frame, or constitution, which were *holy places made with hands;* evidently implying, that this true house or dwelling of God, his people collected, was signified by the outward dwelling, which he ordered to be raised among his figurative people the *Jews;* and, in this respect, and for this end, *Judah was* called *his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.*

Though it may not be right for us curiously or absolutely to point out the meaning of the several members of this holy structure; yet doubtless the wisdom of God had an intention in every part of what is so carefully specified and commanded. We should speak with caution upon these divine allegories, lest we follow our own fancies instead of the mind of God; but doubtless the allegories do exist, and have a sacred sense and analogy of faith, whether we understand them or not. They were also proposed for our consideration, or they

tered *Canaan*, the *Israelites* kept the feast of tabernacles, which signified, both the Lord's abode with them, and their pilgrimage and sojourning upon earth.

* Ezek. xxxvi. † John xvii. 22, 23.
‡ Psalm xlvi. 4. § Heb. ix. 9, 11, 24.

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had never been recorded. It is our duty then to read with reverence, to pray for gracious understanding, and to *compare things spiritual with spiritual.** In this consisted the holy learning of ancient believers, and not in systems excogitated and drawn forth by human reason and invention, which have produced all the present errors and uncertainties in religion: and in this study of the spirit and language of the Bible, to the end of time, will consist all the true knowledge, in divine things, of every real Christian in the world. The rest, as it comes from man, will be found like him—*altogether vanity.*

As the tabernacle signified the *church*, so the curtains, and other parts of the tabernacle, stood for members or branches of the church. The curtains were expressly to be joined by the *edge* or *lip*, *a woman to her sister*, (for so is the Hebrew phrase) plainly denoting, that all the members of Christ are spiritually conjoined together, in one true confession of him, and in a real consociation with each other. The bars, the boards, the taches, the sockets, &c. forming expressly the ONE *tabernacle*,† appear to imply other members or means of perfecting

* It is an unpleasant truth to say, that there are people among us, who would not be thought uninformed in divine things, but who are almost as ignorant of and averse to the Old *Testament*, as Lord *Whitworth*, in his account of the *Russians*, represents that people to be, who, with equal superstition and ignorance, will by no means read it publicly, nor yet so much as suffer it to lie upon their altars. They forget, that Christ hath referred to this very book for the truth of his mission, and that, without it, the New Testament would lose its first and great recorded evidence and foundation.

† Exod. xxvi. 6.

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this sacred consociation; so that (as the apostle expresses it) *the whole building might be fitly framed together in Christ—for an habitation of God through the Spirit.**

None but the priests could enter into the tabernacle, and see what was in it. So, into the true tabernacle, none but those, who are *made priests* spiritually *unto God*,† are admitted or can experimentally *know the things, that are freely given of God.* This is plainly intimated by the Psalmist, who, though he was outwardly a secular man, could say of himself, as being one of these spiritual priests; *in the time of trouble the Lord shall hide me in his pavilion; in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me.*‡ He not only could enter into the tabernacle by faith, but even into the secret-place of it; and that this is the common privilege of God's people, unaltered and unalterable by dispensation or time, he shows, in another psalm, by saying; *he that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty*;§ or, as it is expressed in other places, *the shadow of his wings*; plainly alluding to the sense typified by the wings of the cherubim, who covered first the mercy-seat, or Christ, and under him the whole ark or church of God.‖

It is also worth observing, though it can only be hinted here, that there is a beautiful train and arrangement of circumstances, in the letter of the law, and in

* Eph. ii. 21, 22. † Rev. v. 10.

‡ Psalm xxvii. 6. § Psalm xci. 1.

‖ Psalm xvii. 8. To this our Lord may possibly point in Matt. xviii. 37.

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the things signified, correspondent with each other, and illustrative of both, when brought into comparison.

1. Thus, no person could approach the tabernacle of the Lord, nor eat of the Lord's passover, who had not undergone the sacrament of circumcision, which (as *Maimonides* observes) had a tendency "to diminish and weaken the natural appetite," and "which in its operation, abhorrent to nature, was no slight matter, like the hurt of a leg, or burning of an arm, but a very difficult and painful affair."*—So spiritually; no man can partake of Christ, whose *heart is uncircumcised*, and whose *old man* is not *put off* with his *superfluity of naughtiness*; the doing which is so painful to nature, as to be called *crucifixion and death*. The Spirit of God performs this work by the sharpness of the law, as by a knife or *two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit*. And as circumcision was outwardly performed in one part, as a token for all the old man, with his heart, or his affections and lusts; so the believer, in this life, is not wholly subdued in the old man, or at once, but partially and by degrees, as an earnest of the whole, *until the* full *redemption of the purchased possession*.

2. The circumcised person under the law brought his sacrifice, confessed his sins upon its head, and pleaded the atonement.—Under the gospel; the sinner, convinced, circumcised, and cut down by the spirituality of the law, confesses his sins and sinfulness, and confides

* *More Nev.* p. iii. c. 49.

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in the great sacrifice of Christ *once offered*, and at *one time for all times*,* as his only propitiation and atonement.

3. Under the law; the priests washed at the laver, which stood between the altar † and the tabernacle, before they entered into the holy place.—Under the gospel; the spiritual priests, or true believers, having *received the atonement by Christ*,‡ are *washed by the water of regeneration*, or *renewing of the Holy Ghost*; so that they put on *the new man, who is created in righteousness and true holiness*; and then are they *illuminated* indeed, and enter into the true tabernacle, out of the view, understanding, fellowship, and spirit of this evil world, where they are fed by Christ the *bread*, enlightened by Christ the *light*, and offer up all their duties upon the *golden altar*, Christ, nearest to the holiest of all.

4. Under the law; *the Holy Ghost signified*, by the entrance of the high priest only *once every year* into the *second* part of the tabernacle, *that the* WAY [Christ]

* Heb. x. 10. ἐφάπαξ.

† It is observable, that this altar and the laver were of *brass*, נחש, a word which stands for the serpent, the author of *sin*: and here the *sins* of the people were to be done away, by him, who was to come in the *likeness of sinful flesh*. But when the priests, representing the faithful, entered into the holy place, there no utensil of brass, no memorial of sin, was to be found; but all were of *gold*, the emblem of *righteousness*, and of Christ's righteousness, under which they were there considered as righteous, and not as sinners. This also shows the proper use of the word *saints*, persons separated to God and cleansed from sin, through Christ, and therefore holy. 1 Pet. ii. 5.

‡ Rom. v. 11.

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*into the holiest of all, was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing, which was a figure for the time then present.**—Under the gospel; this sign was fulfilled by the true high-priest, Jesus Christ, who *by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,* and therefore imparts to his people *boldness,* or *liberty, to enter into the holiest by his blood,* (for the high-priest did not enter without blood) *through the vail, that is to say, his flesh;* so that they may now *draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,* i. e. by his blood, *and their bodies washed with pure water,* i. e. by his Spirit.†

Thus, as the way to the Holy and to the Holiest under the law was by the altar and laver; so the plan of the gospel is, that, by propitiation and regeneration, the redeemed enter into the spiritual church here, and into glory hereafter.

All the services of this tabernacle were carrying on, in some respect or other, daily; and particularly, there was the תמיד, or *daily sacrifice,* which was a standing memorial or exhibition of Christ's death, till he should come into the world. No service was presented, or accepted, without reference to atonement. The *daily* sacrifice preached the *continual efficacy* of Christ's atonement, and of our continual support and acceptance by him. Faith always pleads this; and therefore (as *Cocceius* hath well observed) when the opinion of another sacrifice and of human performances being acceptable

* Heb. ix. 7, 8, 9. † Heb. x. 19, &c.

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to God shall prevail in the professing church; then is the taking away the daily sacrifice, and the faith and confession of saints. In other words, it ceases to be a true church, or church of Christ. For these are not indifferent circumstances, about which it may or may not be pernicious to differ; but *fundamentals*, without which there can be no such thing as a faithful and Christian agreement.

The high-priest under the law was to abide in the sanctuary constantly, and to pollute himself upon no occasion; *for the crown* or pre-eminence, or separation, *of the anointing oil of his God was upon him.* So Christ, being without infirmity, was *consecrated for evermore* and *abideth always* in the celestial sanctuary, called *the right hand of God*, as *the head over all things to his church*, and as the *merciful and faithful high-priest*, who should confer both grace and glory.

None could be a priest under the law but of the chosen tribe; and all his service and duty was *allotted* to him, and not carved by himself upon any occasion. so, under the gospel, the people of God are *his heritage*, i. e. his *clergy*,* his *portion by lot, the lot of his inheritance*,† all which terms import a portion, selected or marked out by divine choice and appointment: and as they themselves are chosen for God, so their duties are allotted by God to every one of them. They are *not their own;* neither in soul or body, life or action: and this, when understood, is the highest privilege,

* κληρος. 1 Pet. v. 3. † Deut. xxxii.

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which God can confer upon his redeemed, and the crown and security of all their happiness here and hereafter.

Lastly. The tabernacle was carried of old through the wilderness to *Canaan;* while those, who officiated in or belonged to it, were guided every step of the way, whether by day or night, and supported and defended by Omnipotence itself. So the church of Christ is in a wilderness here, not at home, is conducted by God's providence and grace, and sustained and protected by his almighty power. He ever *bare them on eagle's wings* [the emblem of his Spirit's agency] *and brought them to himself:** *in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.*† Thus when God's people move on in their spiritual journey, they call for his presence and support, as in antient times; *Rise up, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them, that hate thee, flee before thee!* And when they look forward to the end of their faith and hope, even to the *times of restitution,* the appointed revolution and final establishment, *of all things;*‡ then they cry out; *How long, O Lord, holy and true! Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.*

The Lord Christ considers his body *the church* as his *own-self,* and therefore ordained this figure of the tabernacle to stand for both: and, in wonderful wisdom and propriety, it answers to both, in their several respects and relations. He, that toucheth his people, toucheth (as it were) the apple of his eye, which he will not

* Exod. xix. 4. † Isa. lxiii. 9. ‡ Acts iii. 21.

endure.

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endure. Their troubles and sorrows he reckons for his own: *In all their afflictions he was afflicted.* The injuries done to them, he esteems as done to himself; and, therefore, when *Saul* (afterwards *Paul*) was attacking the church, the Lord *Jesus* from heaven in mercy stopped his blind career with, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou* ME?—*I am* JESUS, *whom thou persecutest.* O what love is this, that God should thus deal familiarly with man! That a person in Jehovah should unite himself with human flesh to bring many perishing mortals to glory! That he should so unite himself with these, as to make them parts of himself, and through himself bring them into immediate and everlasting communion with the Godhead!

Believer, remember this in all thy trials and sorrows. Thy Saviour hath pledged himself to sustain thee through them all. Thou art a part of his tabernacle, which the enemy may attack, but shall not destroy; for it is dedicated and devoted to God. Not a bone of his personal body could be broken, as a sign or token, that not one member of his mystical body should ever be ruined or lost. Pray then for the confidence of faith, that thou mayest face those enemies without fear, who are more thy Saviour's enemies, than they are or can be thine. His strength must prevail: and it is thy privilege to lean upon it and to find it expressly engaged for thee. Thou art, it is true, in the wilderness here; but he is thy pillar of cloud and light of fire, thy guide, thy shield, thy sure defence, and will never leave nor forsake thee throughout all the way to the heavenly *Canaan.*

Remember too, that thy high-priest is always personally

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sonally in his sanctuary, and always in spirit with and in his people, ready to hear their prayers, and ready to yield the promised succor. Come to the throne of grace, whenever thou wilt; there he is, and there he *abideth ever*. He heareth in the night-season as well as in the day time; for he, that keepeth thee, will neither slumber nor sleep. Thou mayest and dost forget thyself; but he never ceases to remember both thee and all thy affairs. As his ear is ever open to thy prayers, so his eye is always upon thee for thy good. Thou art a real part of himself; and therefore, it is impossible, that thou shouldest ever be miserable or lost.

These words and figures, which the divine wisdom hath afforded to convey such momentous truths, are undoubtedly strong; but they are weakness itself, compared with the things and purposes, which they are employed to denote. Raise thy thoughts, O Christian, ever so high; express them never so forcibly; call the LORD, thy rock, thy fortress, thy deliverer, thy strength, thy buckler, the horn of thy salvation, thy high tower, or by a thousand other endearing and powerful terms; he is this indeed: but he is ten thousand times more than all this to thee; yea, infinitely more, than the words of heaven or earth can declare. *Call* then upon this thy redeeming God, *who is worthy to be praised; and so shalt thou be saved from thine enemies.*

"But I am pressed with the sense of my unworthiness, of my extreme sinfulness both of heart and life."—This is a reason, not for staying away, but for calling upon him more earnestly. *Peter* evidently knew not what he said, when he cried, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful*

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a *sinful man, O Lord!* He came to save such, as feel themselves unsaved, and therefore despair of other remedies. No man since the fall was ever received by him, but as a poor, distressed, and helpless sinner. He hath nothing to do with those, who fancy they can help themselves, or who would be saved in any degree without him by themselves. Thy sorrows of heart and convictions of sin are probably that painful circumcision of the Spirit, which by the law he uses to mortify and subdue thy old man, and *without* which thou canst not know the power or the worth of his grace.* This circumcision, like the *strait gate* (another image for the same thing) may be difficult, and even odious, to flesh and blood; but it must be undergone, it must be passed through, to the kingdom of God. There be many that *climb up another way*, and have no evidence of their profession, but their own fleshly (or, as it may be called, uncircumcised, unsubdued) reason; but this keeps them *whole* in themselves, without compunction of spirit, without renunciation of the pride or power of nature, without giving up all into the hands of Jesus, without communion *with him*, and *without deriving* any thing from him. Their souls are lean and empty of the true savor of the knowledge of Christ; and their object is to work, and to live, and to increase, by themselves. But thou, O man of God, flee these things. Let Jesus be the alone object of thy trust and confidence. Every

* After the revelation of the fiery law, the Lord no longer met with his people, at Sinai, inspiring terrors; but in the *tabernacle*, in Christ and his offices of salvation, speaking mercy and peace to the soul. There is an analogy to this in Christian experience.

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thing upon earth, without Christ, and besides Christ, shall fail. He only is *the rock;* and *his work* only is *perfect.*

Come then, thou broken in heart, *let us go into his tabernacle, let us worship at his footstool.* Let us plead the sacrifice of our paschal Lamb, who was appointed to be slain for the worst sinners in the world, even for those who feel themselves to be worse than the worst; let us confess our sins, and transfer them to his sacred and devoted head; let us approach his holy laver, and ask for the purification and grace of his Holy Spirit; let us advance in faith to his more immediate presence, and consider ourselves as redeemed priests, who have now a right to enter into his holy place and be members of his mystic tabernacle; let us feed upon Christ in secret, and thus be enlightened by him and understand wisdom; let us also offer upon him, the golden altar which shall sanctify the gift, the largest tributes of the incense of praise and thanksgiving, for the unspeakable mercies of our God; and then let us not wrong the truth of JEHOVAH for a moment by a doubt, but that *they shall come up with acceptance* before him, and that he finally *will glorify* us, as the parts or members, with the whole *house of his glory.*

TEMPLE.

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TEMPLE.

After many years, and in God's appointed time, the tabernacle of *Moses* and its œconomy were accomplished in the temple of *Solomon*. But both of these were shadows or figures of Christ and his people. The one denoted them as passing through the wilderness of this world; the other represented them as fixed for ever in heaven.

The Hebrew name, היכל, for which we have no correspondent word but *temple*, is usually derived from a root which signifies *power*; and possibly there is an allusion to this, among other circumstances, in the name of the two pillars in the porch, called *Jachin* and *Boaz*; the literal translation of which is, *he will establish* it *in strength*. The whole fabric in itself, and especially in what it was intended to describe, was ordered and settled by infinite might and wisdom, beyond the craft of enemies to impeach, or their power to impair. For,

As the tabernacle was constructed according to the pattern or representation, which was shewn to *Moses* in the holy mount; so the temple was arranged and framed, in every part of it, according to the *pattern* which *David* had *by the Spirit*, and *gave* to Solomon his son.* And so far was all this above human schemes

* 1 Chron. xxviii. 12.

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or invention, that even *David* himself, wise and prophetic as he was, could not so much as understand the things communicated to him, without divine and immediate instruction. ALL *this* (said he) *concerning the writing*, or draught, JEHOVAH *made me to understand by his hand* [or Spirit] *upon me, even* ALL THE WORKS *of this pattern.** And then, like a true king-shepherd, he prays for the flock committed to his charge; that Jehovah in covenant *would preserve this* [the temple and its appurtenances] *continually for the framing of thoughts*, or exciting spiritual ideas, *for the heart of his people, and settle their heart towards him.*† In this view of its use and designation, well might he call it *great and wonderful*,‡ or mysterious (as the word also means;) for no other building ever had such honour put upon it, as to be the representative of God in Christ, and of Christ in his people. Nor could any have contrived such a sensible demonstration of divine truth, or taught the purpose of it, but God himself: and in this knowledge, the highest and most important in the world, consisted all the learning of the ancient and faithful Jews. In divine things, man never yet knew any thing rightly, but by divine teaching: his own reason, fallen and benighted as it is, can only lead him wider and wider astray, in all attempts to search out God, or to study the Almighty to perfection; and it may lead him to the pitch of the wildest delirium and error in matters of this kind. For, if madness be, in

* *Ubi supra*, v. 19. † 1 Chron. xxix. 18.
‡ 2 Chron. ii. 9.

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its true definition, nothing more or less than the wandering of the mind from reality, or the triumph of the imagination over truth; then, the innumerable excursions which have been made by men, upon subjects of divinity, *without* the rule and *beyond* the rule of God's own revelation, and the forgetfulness that this revelation contains no *questions* to be ventilated, but *determinations* to be followed; serve to show, how few sane and sober people, in God's eye, are to be found in the world, and how, of all others, the philosophers (as they are wrongly called) of the day, spoiled and spoiling others *through vain deceit*, have the least real claim of all men to the firm and just condition of a *sound mind*. They, uniformly following *the rudiments of the world*, can ascend or wish to ascend no higher, and will, together with *all their thoughts*, if grace interpose not, *perish* with it. But to return.

Besides the inward and spiritual glory of the temple, which certainly was infinitely above all other considerations; the skill and proportions of the architecture itself were so perfect and extraordinary, that *Villalpandus*, whom our *Selden* calls a most excellent divine and mathematician, does not scruple to assert, that the *Greeks* (and from them the *Romans*, and particularly *Vitruvius*, the ingenious architect to *Julius* and *Augustus Cæsar*) derived their knowledge of the art from it, and from other edifices built by *Solomon*.* The present ruins of *Tadmor* or *Palmyra*, founded by that prince, though chiefly remains of structures raised perhaps long

* Seld. *de jure nat.* l. i. c. 2. Wits. *Ægypt.* p. 464.

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since his time, may have been framed from his original designs; if even none of those durable marbles (which is not wholly improbable) are fragments of the originals themselves. Concerning the temple, this appears to be certain, that, whether the riches and vast expence* of raising it, or the quantity of materials and number of workmen, or the exquisite beauty of the edifice itself, be considered; the world never saw a building of such outward splendor and magnificence, or of such inward holiness and majesty. It was the visible palace of the King of heaven upon earth; and a sensible picture of his sublime and invisible glory.

But its inward and spiritual glory, even in the estimation of the Jews, constituted its chief and true graudeur. The *Shecinah*, or *divine presence*, typified by a luminous cloud upon the ark of the covenant, and manifested by answers of Urim and Thummim, or of the Holy Spirit in prophetic inspirations, was the peculiar eminence of that sacred and sumptuous pile. Yet these supreme advantages remained but for a time, partly through the apostasy of the Jews, and partly because they were prefigurative only of more wonderful declarations and displays of divine mercy, which concentered in the appearance of the Son of God in the world, under the name IMMANUEL, GOD *with us*, or, GOD *manifest*

* The overlaying of the most holy place only with gold, a cubical room of 30 feet in the side, has been calculated to come to £4,320,000 of our sterling money. PRIDEAUX's *Conn.* P. I. B. 3.

in

*in the flesh.** He is the true presence or exhibition of Jehovah; revealing grace, mercy, and peace, to poor and perishing men. And when he appears in his holy temple, as he doth now in part in his people individually, and will hereafter in his whole church collectively: then it may be said, beholding the beautiful intention of *Solomon* and his temple resolved into Christ and his church, that greater than those are here.† The temple was

* The whole fabric of the universe, the courses and ordinations both of providence and grace, compose only one undeviating (though to our view complex) system of *means*, and are by no means a *final cause*, or *end*, either in whole or in part. In proof of this, we may observe there is no *rest*, or *resting place*, in the visible or elementary creation; all things fluctuate and move onwards, either to produce or to establish something beyond themselves: and these, in their turn, act over the same or similar operations, for others. Consequently, nothing here has attained its own proper end; but is restlessly urged to a *plus ultrà*. So the apostle; *the whole creation travaileth*, &c. And grace itself, with all its operations and objects here, passes through the world as through a strange country, and pushes on for consummation and rest to a futurity of glory.

† The temple was built upon Mount *Moriah*, the mount of *vision* or *instruction*; so called, because there *Abraham* foresaw, that Jehovah *would come to his temple*, or Christ appear in the flesh, for the salvation of his church. *Abraham* himself named the particular spot *Jehovah jireh*, in token of his faith in the promise: and accordingly the next words should have been rendered, *In the mount* JEHOVAH *shall be seen*. This mountain, by a figure, stands for the temple itself; and both temple and mountain relate to the spiritual church, of which *Isaiah* and *Zechariah* prophesied. Isaiah xxv. 6, 7, 10. Zech. viii. 3.

Among other proofs, that the outward splendor of the temple was the least part of its glory; the second temple, under *Zerubbabel*,

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was only a figure of *Christ's body*, and was so explained by himself in John ii. 21. And alluding in the first instance to his natural body, and, through that, in the second, to his spiritual body, of which the component parts, his people, are termed his *members*, his *flesh* and his *bones*; not one of which, however oppressed for a time, could, not more than those of his natural body, be finally *lost* or *broken*.

Gentiles as well as Jews were employed in preparing materials for, and in building, the outward temple. And in Christ's spiritual temple, blessed be God, Jews and Gentiles have one common right and privilege, are mutually members of the same glorious fabric, and shall be united in fraternal, indivisible, love for evermore. It is even probable, that the Gentiles will make up the far greater part of that holy assembly; for never do we read of such multitudes of true believers in the Jewish history, as we can trace from time to time in later records. Possibly, the greatest gathering of souls, at any one period of the Hebrew church, was in the last period of forty years, a little before the entire abolition of the Jewish place and removal of the Jewish nation.

Sabel, inferior as it was to the former, was prophesied of as vastly surpassing it in real greatness; because the DESIRE of all nations was to appear in it, and to give *peace* in that place. Hag. ii. 7. 9. This title is *personal* to Christ (contrary to the opinion of a late author) as that same word חמדת was to *Saul*, 1 Sam. ix. 20. That this was truly *the second* temple, notwithstanding *Herod*'s new erections, and that, as such, the daily sacrifice and other ministrations were continually carried on in it; see SCALIGER *de emend. temp.* l. 6. and SELD. *de Synedr.* l. iii. c. 13. § 8. See also Dr. GILL. on the Prophecies, c. 3.

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All the materials, and every part of the outward fabric, were prepared and fitted for their respective places, before they were brought together; *so that* (according to the divine command) *there was neither hammer, nor ax, nor any tool of iron, heard in the house, while it was building.** This was to denote, that all the spiritual building is fitted and prepared in this present life, part by part, in their order and succession; and that, hereafter, the component parts will be *fitly joined together*, and remain in a holy and heavenly rest for the everlasting habitation of God. There they shall no more need to be hewn with afflictions, to cut away their exorbitancies; no more hammered with temptations and trials, to fix and confirm their faith; nor can the iron ever enter again into their souls, to divest them of earth, or to prepare them for heaven.

The outward temple and its œconomy were to serve but for a while, and stood upon a conditional covenant and *carnal ordinances, imposed until the time of reformation*, or of correction and full explanation;† i. e. by a more perfect dispensation. The Jews broke the conditions, and, according to God's foresight and appointment, they are *become a proverb and a by-word among all people*; their house is left unto them desolate; and their fruitful land is become barren, through their wickedness. The Lord *hath cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem*; that is, he hath removed the ancient means of grace from the Jews, by which in spirit (like *Elijah*) they mounted to heaven,

* 1 Kings vi. 7. † Heb. ix. 10.

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and in consequence hath also taken away those faithful and praying redeemed ones, who are the Lord's host indeed, and engaged in his spiritual warfare. The fulfilment of these prophecies is now as evident, as it hath been for ages. Every Jew we see (and we may see Jews scattered all over the world) is a mark of scorn, and a living witness of the truth of divine wrath and revelation. The nation, quite unexampled in the history of all other people, is kept distinct from the rest of mankind, though confused in itself and every where dispersed. The land of *Canaan* is now barren and wretched beyond comparison. And if we enquire into the cause of all this, the Lord himself foretold the proper answer, near three thousand years ago, and before the great transgression.* I might have said above three thousand years, even before they had entered the land, or had thoughts of building the temple.† And how often they were warned and threatened afterwards, we may read in many parts of the bible.‡—But God's *true* and *spiritual* people are partakers of a *better covenant, which is established upon better promises*;§—a *covenant*, which stands, not upon man's performance, but upon God's prerogative;—*promises*, which do not rest upon human will and power, but upon the divine faithfulness and omnipotence. *This is the covenant, that I will make with the house of Israel* AFTER *those days* [*the days that were to come*, עולם הבא, *the world to come*, (as the Jews speak)

* 1 Kings ix. 8, 9. † Deut. xxix. 24.
‡ Jer. xxii. 5, &c. Hosea ix. 17. Luke xix. 41, &c.
§ Heb. viii. 6.

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i. e. the future or Christian dispensation] *saith the* LORD: *I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God* [their Alehim,] *and they shall be to me a people.** To these spiritual people, and of this everlasting covenant, it is said; *the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the* LORD, *that hath mercy upon thee.*†

From hence we may perceive too, that the things of God, pertaining to salvation, are of a divine and spiritual nature; and that, though they may be shadowed forth by terrene and sensible objects, they are not necessarily connected with, and do not depend upon them. Thus, *the law completed nothing, but* was επεισαγωγη, the succedaneum, the subintroduction of, the subordinate means to bring in, *a better hope, by the which we draw nigh unto God*‡. If any outward services and circumstances upon earth could claim the privilege of a necessary connection with spiritual things, certainly the Jewish œconomy, as ordained by God himself, might claim it above all others. But when the carnal *Israelites*, merely because they were *Israelites* and children of *Abraham*,§ trusted in God's favor, without the circumcision of the

* Heb. viii. 10. from Jer. xxxi. 31, &c. † Isa. liv. 10. see also Isa. lix. 21. ‡ Heb. vii. 19. § This is the unhappy Jewish confidence to this day. They expect mercy and favor from God, because they are the descendants of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, who, from a sense of their own sinfulness, looked for a spiritual Redeemer, which their unhappy offspring fail to do.

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heart or consequent holiness of life; when they exclaimed, in this spirit, *the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are we*, grounding themselves upon this external distinction alone, without any spiritual sense of its true life and importance; then, as the prophet speaks, they *trusted in lying words*;* and they found at last, that, when the Lord of the temple appeared, he first in sign, and afterwards in fact, drove them all out of it, because they had made it a *den of thieves*. They had robbed it of its true glory and intention, and perverted it to the world, the flesh, and the devil. And thus it was with respect to their sacrifices, which, when made carnally only, were no more than the head of a *dog*, or *swine's blood*, before the Lord. Nay, he who killed a clean beast not in faith, by which alone it could typically bear sin, shed *innocent blood* in God's account, with the aggravation of doing it in the *place* where *guilt* was to be confessed and atoned.†

In like manner, it is not enough for us to call ourselves Christians, and to value ourselves upon any privileges, which we have outwardly above the heathen world, if we have not also *Christ in us the hope of glory*. A man may assent to all the articles of the Christian faith, and yet be condemned for an unbeliever. He may go through every means of grace, and partake of the holy sacraments; he may even live a sober and decent life, with the outward performance of all religious duties, and may do much for himself, his friends, and the world; but

* Jer. vii. 4. † Lev. xvii. 3, 4. Jer. vii, 6.

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still be dead to God, a wretched empty formalist, without faith, or hope, or love, or any true taste or relish of spiritual and heavenly things. Natural men, and especially those who have been trained up to science and the knowledge of divinity in an ethical and metaphysical way, are amazed at this sort of language, and, with the learned scribes and pharisees of old, cannot conceive how it is possible, that they should be blind in these matters, and that simple and unlearned people should often know more of them than themselves.* Hence it is, that they think them conceited, and affected with the desire of singularity; while *they speak* (and our Lord puts himself with them) *what they do know* experiment-

* Perhaps, there may be a snare (often to be guarded against) in genius and a fine understanding, even when employed in the things of God. Rational thoughts, brilliant expressions, a captivating oratory, and the like, are but little akin to the simplicity of God's word, and the plainness with which it is written. Men of this kind, even good men, are liable to be drawn into abstract and metaphysical researches, into argumentative or disputatious strains, into new, and therefore suspicious, theories and distinctions, rather than into those plain facts and truths, which fill the sacred pages without the πιθοις λογοις of man's wisdom, or into such a deep impression of their importance, as leaves no inclination for what will then be understood to be an egregious trifling of human powers, instead of that spiritual energy which refers all the glory and all the blessing to a higher cause. In proportion as men are fond of disputing, or of (what they call) the reasonableness of things, in religion; in that proportion will they be found dull within, and weak without. God will bless nothing but his own simple unadulterated truth; and the plainer this is set forth, the better. Nobody thinks, that the splendor of the diamond should be hid by a splendid case: it looks best when exposed to view, upon the plainest and the gravest ground.

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ally, *and testify what they have seen* spiritually; and therefore they neither *receive their witness*, unless God have mercy upon them, nor can endure their persons. They forget, in this vein of reproach, that God's witnesses have often stood alone in his cause. *Elijah* was almost if not quite the only prophet, who resisted the torrent in his time; and *Micaiah* the son of *Imlah* had all the other prophets upon him, when he testified against an evil king. When he was cautioned for this singularity, he replied, with a noble heroism of faith; *As* Jehovah *liveth, even what my God saith, that will I speak.** It was said of *Athanasius*, that he was against all the world, and all the world against him: and the same might have been said of *Paphnutius*, *Luther*, and many others. We must detach, in this great cause, persons from things, and number from consequence. The truth of God hath ever had but few followers in its truth, though many professors. *Strait is the gate* now, as it ever was, *and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life; and* FEW *there be that find it.* It was always *a* comparatively LITTLE *flock, to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom.*

Reader, art thou of this flock, this spiritual temple? Doth *Christ* (which is the purpose of this temple) *dwell in thy heart by faith?* Art thou watching for God's everlasting inhabitation within thee, by the operations of his Spirit, by the correction of his word, by the succession of his providences, by faith in his mercies, by love to himself and his service? Art thou *looking toward*

* 2 Chron xviii. 13.

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the mercy seat of his holy temple, or, in other words, to Christ as *thine* head, as well as the head of all other his people? Is *the desire of thy soul to his name, and to the remembrance of him?* Canst thou say, *With my soul have I desired him in the night*, and *my spirit within me hath sought him early?* Art thou thus looking, in the ways of holiness, for this blessed *Immanuel*, as thine only expectation, and only hope? Is it, at times, the melting, the burning desire of thine heart, to see his presence in righteousness, and to wake up in his likeness? If Christ do indeed dwell in thy heart by faith, if thou art a real member of his holy temple, thou wilt love the light of his countenance above all things; thou wilt dread the thought of departing from him, or of his absence from thee; and, as thou art graciously made his habitation, thou wilt sometimes, if not often, long to be in his, even in the mansion which he hath prepared for thee.—O what felicity is there in these divine expectations! How do they vivify the soul, and animate it above the sordid, miserable, pursuits and agitations of a passing, dying, world! As the greatest stars appear minute and inconsiderable to us because of their distance; so the Christian, who is lifted up the highest in spirit towards his heavenly home, can behold, with the most gracious indifference, the lower cares of time, and can count them and the earth itself, but littleness, and even dung, compared with the excellency of Christ and his transcendent mercies.

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HOUSE OF GOD.

THIS term conveys the same idea with the word *temple*, under a more familiar form. It implies, by an easy figure, the *constant* inhabitation of God with and in his people, as his favored and peculiar home. *The house of God is the church of the living God.** Not the frame of a building, but a particular designation of persons: *whose house are* WE † (says the apostle, speaking of Christ;) we believers, whom he is building up for that purpose, as parts composing the grand fabric, in which he will abide for ever.

This building is of God. No tool of man can be lifted up upon it: men themselves are but tools in his hand, accomplishing his work. The attempt is *violation* and *pollution* in the sight of God.*

* 1 Tim. iii. 15. † Heb. iii. 6.

* Exod. xx. 25. It is seriously to be remarked, how exact and careful the whole Jewish œconomy was of any thing *polluted* or *forbidden*. No pleas of danger or convenience were admitted in breach of the rule. Persons uncircumcised, or out of the covenant; and persons circumcised, and therefore holy in that respect, yet having contracted any defilement; were excluded from holy offices and places, while under those circumstances. When *Nadab* and *Abihu*, consecrated priests and sons of *Aaron*, from whatever motive either of pride or perverseness, offered *strange fire* before the Lord; fire which had *not descended from heaven*; their service was abominable, and their persons were destroyed. And

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The design is of God. None can add, none can diminish, here. The plan was laid before the foundation of the world, and hath been carrying into execution from time to time, according to the contract or covenant between the Divine Persons in JEHOVAH. It is *ordered in all things and sure.*

The completion also must be of God. For, in this respect principally, it is sung of the Lord, *Thou art worthy to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things; and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.*

The house of God is *anointed*, and thereby consecrated to himself for ever. As an emblem of this, *Jacob* anointed a single *stone* for a pillar of memorial, and called it *God's house:** and for the same purpose, the *tabernacle* afterwards, with all its appurtenances, was ordered to be anointed with holy oil, as the place of his immediate presence. Thus God's house, or the mem-

And when *Uzziah*, apprehending the fall of the ark, in its passage from *Kiriath jearim*, put forth an unhallowed and forbidden hand with error or rashness to support it, the Lord *made a breach upon him*, for a warning to *others*. 2 Sam. vi. 6.—All this preaches to us, in a most lively yet awful manner, that God *will be sanctified* IN *them that come nigh him*; (Lev. x. 3.) that only the pure fire of his own Spirit can carry up the incense of prayer and praise, with acceptance before him; and that those, who intrude themselves contrary to his word, or meddle with holy things in an unhallowed way, or presume upon their own powers or goodness to support the truth of God, faithless in his providence or independent of his grace; shall fail in their object, and (if mercy prevent not) perish in their sins. See Isa. l. 11. Numb. iv. 15. 1 Chron. xv. 13. 1 Sam. xiii. 13, &c.

* Gen. xxviii. 17, &c.

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bers which compose it, are CHRISTIANS; that is, *persons anointed* with the holy unction of God's Spirit, and thereby made unalienably his own for evermore.

This is their glory, that they are the Lord's, and *not their own*; that he hath purchased them to the liberty and happiness of everlasting purity, from the bondage of corruption and misery of sin; and that he keeps what he hath purchased, by the never-failing exertions of his almighty power. No thought, perhaps, could terrify them more, than the thought of being left to themselves.

Except the Lord build the HOUSE, *they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the* CITY *the watchman waketh but in vain.* Believers understand this text, in its most important sense, and can apply it to purpose.

Wherever God's house is, there is also his presence. It is never unfurnished by HIM, who filleth all in all. Hence, as a single stone could be the memorial of this matter, with *Jacob*; so each individual believer is an *anointed stone* of the Lord's abode, and, because anointed, a *living* and a *lively stone* in his holy habitation. He is appointed, as well as anointed, to salvation, and therefore shall never die, never be removed. He is a part of the Lord's everlasting memorial. Two or three met together in his name have yet more expressive tokens of his presence: and how vast then shall the joy and the demonstration be of the Lord's gracious yet awful majesty, when all the redeemed, in one great assembly, shall constitute the spiritual house of his eternal abode? *The Lord hath chosen Zion: he hath desired*

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desired it for his habitation; saying, *This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it.**

Into this house, when fixed in its ordained place, nothing corruptible or vile can possibly enter; no sin, no care, no sorrow, nothing that can defile or disturb. Below, indeed, it is not so. Hypocrites and unsound professors are not easily distinguished from the faithful and sincere. But though they may be in the house, during the present state, yet they are not of the house: "They may enter into the house, but are not the house itself."

As believers are the habitation of God through the Spirit, so he is their's. The point of their rest, the consummation of their faith and joy, *the place of their sanctuary*, is *the throne of glory*, the *height* over all from him who is *the beginning*, the *first* and the *last*, and who ordained all this blessedness from before the foundation of the world.

O, who can think of these things, and not be moved! Who can hope for them, and not rejoice? Who can rejoice in the prospect of this possession, and not look down with contempt upon the foolish pomps and vanities of this dying world, upon the puny cares and concerns, which agitate and teize men almost to death continually, or which plunge them into a dreadful forgetfulness of God and themselves?

On the other hand; how should the weak and trembling believer lift up his hands that hang down, and stay his feeble knees; when this mercy, this great mercy,

* Psalm cxxxii. 13, 14.

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this transcendently great and unalienable mercy, is all open before him, and all most freely and most surely his own? If any thing ought to grieve him, it is his doubt of it; his poor, low, hopes; his dull, cold desires; his drooping, unfeeling, unanimated, spirit. This should both grieve and make him ashamed; and that, after so many precious promises, such full and positive declarations, such undeniable evidence of the love and sufferings of Christ, such sure tokens of the Spirit's grace and instruction, such reiterated demonstrations of the love of the Father; he should dare to imagine, that it is all in vain, or (what is the same thing) all to no effect towards him, who seeks no other refuge, who abhors and abandons every trust and confidence in himself, and who can truly say, *This is all my salvation, and all my desire!*—From such an impeachment of the divine truth and honor, and from such a robbery of happiness to his ownself; may every believer fervently say, *Good Lord, deliver me!*

CITY

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CITY OF GOD.

GLORIOUS *things are spoken of thee,* or, revealing in thee, *O city of God!* All that Jehovah hath declared in his word, all that he hath wrought upon earth, and all the astonishing mercies of redemption by his Son, have appeared and been accomplished for thy sake, in the most intimate and inseparable connection with his own glory!

This title refers to the church, both as to its original plan, and to its gradual and final execution and accomplishment. The plan is laid down in the covenant of grace. The materials are the chosen and called of God, hewn and prepared, and at length removed by him out of the world. And the city itself stands upon the *holy mountain* of heaven, is now building and increasing from day to day, as the redeemed are gathered in; and shall finally be perfect and complete, without the omission of one spiritual or *living stone*, when the last of the appointed number shall be collected and fitted for its place.

This city is called the *new Jerusalem*, in opposition to the *old*, which was to vanish away; and this city is *builded and compacted together*, forming one spiritual fabric; and, though a fabric, yet a bride; and this *bride the Lamb's wife.** To express the perfection of its ori-

* Rev. xxi. 9.

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ginal design and final accomplishment, JEHOVAH, *Father, Son* and *Spirit*, the all-wise and omnipotent architect or builder, hath described it as an exact mathematical square, and the fulness of its inhabitants by a perfect and square number, which admits neither the least defect nor redundancy. It is also called a *mountain** to denote its firmness and stability. Thither *the tribes go up* from generation to generation, even *the tribes of* Jehovah, to give thanks unto his holy name, and to praise him for ever and ever.† They have *a nail*, "a constant and sure abode," *in his holy place;* and a *wall*, an appointed and measured line of building and defence, in this true *Judah*, and most holy *Jerusalem*.‡ It is built all of pure and precious stones, capable of freely receiving light, and of finely reflecting it, though in distinct variety when received: and this light is neither from the sun, nor the moon, nor from any creatures; but *the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. No night* can be *there;* and *the glory and honor of the nations*, even the redeemed among men, however despised below, as diamonds in the mine by an ignorant eye, *are brought into it*, and rejoice with thanksgiving throughout eternity.

Thus it appears, that the people of God are *citizens of no mean city*, which they at once inhabit and compose; but are the companions of angels, kings and priests in a beautiful temple, joint-heirs with Christ's human nature of an exceeding and eternal weight of

* Isa. xxv. 6. ii. 2. Ps. lxviii. 15, 16.
† Ps. cxxii. ‡ Ezra ix. 8, 9.

glory,

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glory, and the friends and delight of JEHOVAH himself world without end.

It is not possible, we are often told, to express or conceive the joys of this heavenly *city*, or union of the faithful in an inseparable life and love; or to describe the privileges of its innumerable *citizens*, its distinct and individual members; and therefore we must rest upon what the Lord hath graciously revealed concerning them. *Of this, however*, we may be sure, that our *faculties*, whatever forms they may bear in that heavenly world, shall all be pure, perfect, and sublime; and that the pure, perfect, and sublime *exercise* of those faculties, upon the objects fitted and appointed for them, will constitute much of our happiness. For though labour is the effect of sin, and consequently toilsome and painful to the weak and unequal powers of a sinner; yet the most energetic employment of perfect beings, like the passage of the heavenly bodies in their orbits, may blissfully unite the most constant velocity of motion or duty, with the most entire possession of tranquillity or rest. We shall, in a word, be partakers of as much felicity, as God can bestow, and we receive. The fulness, which filleth all in all, will fill every one, according to his measure, with joy unspeakable and transcendent glory.

O my soul, what hath God wrought, and wrought for thee! Who could believe, if the evidence was not clear in the word of the faithful Jehovah, and in the truth of a living experience granted by his power, that a weak dying wanderer upon earth, despicable and despised among men, poor without any thing of his own, and

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and worthless without power or right to obtain; should be held so dear in the sight of a holy and just God, through the merit and mediation of his Son, as to be made a denizen of heaven, to be endowed with the privileges of eternal royalty among thrones and principalities and powers; to be lifted up high above falling; and to be made incessantly happy without cloying; and all freely, fully, and everlastingly, by the arm of Omnipotence, and by the harmonious exercise of the wonderful attributes of the Godhead!—O the height and depth of this love of God! *Who can utter the mighty acts of* JEHOVAH? *Who can show forth all his praise?*

Contemplate, my soul, this thy blessed citizenship from day to day; go on, in heart, according to it, with faithful comfort and confidence; and, in life, pray, watch, and zealously strive to adorn and walk worthy of it; till thou be removed, from this state of exile and absence, to thy own appointed portion in that glad world, where thou shalt see thy Redeemer face to face, and be like unto him and to thy brethren with him, throughout the eternity ever before thee.

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BODY OF CHRIST.

THIS is a figure employed by the Holy Spirit, in the New Testament, to express the most perfect and inseparable union, which subsists between Christ and his people. It is also employed to denote the intimate communion of saints; partially in this life, because of their sinful bodies; but entirely hereafter, when they are complete in glory. It is a union which doth not destroy personal identity, but which consists in having a sameness of life, by immediate derivation from the Godhead through and with Christ Jesus, who is *head over all* to distribute this life unto those, who are in spiritual conjunction with him. The tabernacle, under the Old Testament, exhibited in figure, nearly, if not quite, a similar purpose and instruction.

The apostle considers this important subject, with its proper inferences, in his epistle to the *Corinthians. By one Spirit* (says he) *are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.** That is, being baptized into Christ, we have put on Christ; so that he is now our new life, through participation of the same Spirit: and yet our personal character is not destroyed, any more than the hand, because of

* 1 Cor. xii. 13.

its

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its conjunction with the body, ceases not to be a hand; for the body is not one member, or one undistinguishable mass, but many members, and every one of these (as the apostle speaks in another place) *members one of another.** Believers, from age to age, are aggregately one body, as composing the church of Christ; and they are members of that body, or members of Christ who is the head of it, when considered individually in themselves.†

Many noble uses are to be made of this great truth for the comfort and edification of the children of God. The figure, which represents it, was chosen by the wisdom of the Holy Ghost for this very purpose. It was not employed to delude us with a speculative fancy, but to describe, as much as earthly things may describe, a blessed and experimental reality.

In the *book* of God, or his covenant, were all the members of Christ *written* from before the foundation of the world,‡ *which in continuance were fashioned*, or, *what days they should be fashioned, when as yet there was none*

* Eph. iv. 25.

† To this purpose is the observation of a great champion for the Church of England. "They, who belong to the mystical body of our Saviour Christ, and are in number as the stars of heaven, divided successively by reason of their mortal condition into many generations, are notwithstanding *coupled every one to Christ their Head*, and *all unto every particular person* amongst themselves; inasmuch as the same SPIRIT, which anointed the blessed soul of our Saviour Christ, doth so formalize, unite, and actuate *his whole race*, as if both he and they were so many limbs compacted into one body, by being quickened all with one and the same soul." Eccl. Pol. B. v. § 56.

‡ Eph. i. 5. Rev. xvii. 8.

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*of them.** Accordingly God is said to *foreknow his people*, and, foreknowing them, to have *given them to Christ*. He saw them as his own, while they existed only *in secret;* and he considered them, according to the everlasting covenant, as in Christ before time began, and as members of Christ, for whom he was (in the view of the same covenant) *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*.† This was their *election of God*, who *declareth the end from the beginning, and from ancient times* [מקדם, *from before all time*] *the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure*.‡

These being Christ's *own, given of the Father* to him as their God-man-mediator, he *prayed*, or interceded with his divine merits, *for them, but not for the world, that they may be one*, even as God and Christ *are one;* God in Christ, and Christ in God, that they also may be one in them; Christ in them, and God in Christ, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the glory which was given to Christ, and the love wherewith the Father loved him, may be given to them and be in them, and he in them as their life and hope of glory.§ According to this divine plan, when Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, the antient prophecy, by that act, was said to be fulfilled, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*. This related to Christ as the *head of his body the church*, proving him to be the appointed *first-born among many*

* Ps. cxxxix. 16.
† Rev. xiii. 8.
‡ Isa. xlvi. 10.
§ John xvii.

brethren,

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brethren, who, by this glorious demonstration of his victory and finished salvation, and by the power of this resurrection, are entitled to become the sons of God in him, and are said therefore to be *begotten*, by that very deed, *to a lively hope through the mercy of God.** Alluding to this, the apostle says, that God *hath* RAISED US UP TOGETHER, *and made us* SIT TOGETHER *in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* We are *quickened with Christ, raised up together* with him, and *made to sit together*, as one body, one entire substance, upon *one abiding ground*, ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις, *in the super-heavenlies*, in that which is *above* the שמים, or natural heavens, even in the spiritual שמים or אלהים, the immediate presence of the divine persons in Jehovah, of whom the others are the constituted figure.† Thus, the divine nature was called by the Jews, שם שמים "the name of the heavens;" i. e. the invisible reality and archetype of what these are only the sensible image and picture. Thus, *the kingdom of heaven*, distinguished into the rule of grace and providence, is the spiritual purpose of *the heavens* in the glory of God and salvation of his people. All this shows the great *provision* and *certainty* of their *holy calling*, or *high vocation*, and that it shall proceed to the several effects, described by the apostle in that glorious order, with which he comforts the believing *Romans*, and with them other believers to the end of time.‡

Upon this mighty and wonderful foundation, the members of Christ's mystical body have a rightful claim,

* Acts xiii. 33. 1 Pet. i. 3. Rom. i. 4.
† Eph. ii. 6. ‡ Rom. viii. 28—39.

under

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under their head and in conjunction with him, to all the mercies, graces, and blessings of God's everlasting covenant, which the revelation of his word hath set before them. They have a right to these both as a body and as individuals; for whatever belongs to the whole, belongs to every part in its place and order. They come, therefore, to the throne of grace, not as slaves, but as freemen; not as servants, but as children; not as mere expectants, but as undoubted heirs, yea, as *heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus.* Accordingly, the apostle speaks of the believer's privilege in this respect, as a παρρησια, an open, clear, evidential, liberty or boldness; an access to God with confidence and full dependance by the faith of Christ:*—a liberty, founded upon an indefeasable right, and used with the confiding freedom of a lawful and undoubted son. We cannot therefore ask, in submission to the divine will and agreeable to the divine word, more than what Christ hath purchased for us, or more than what God hath promised to bestow in him and through him: and we cannot ask this with too great frequency, or too much assurance of faith. Our heavenly Father loves the ardent, holy, importunity of his children.†

Union with Christ implies communion of *life*, sentiments, and manners, with Christ. As every member of the natural body is actuated immediately by the head; so every member of Christ's mystical body is guided by his wisdom, and receives all true nourishment and

* Eph. iii. 12. Heb. iv. 16. † Luke xviii. 1. xi. 1.—13. Matt. vii. 7, xxi. 22.

activity

activity from him, as being the source of life to all that believe. It would be strange, indeed, were the head and the body to live by different principles, go different ways, act for separate purposes, and come to different ends. There is no such schism as this in Christ's spiritual body. His members *hold*, and *hold fast* too (as the word signifies) their life-giving HEAD, *from which* ALL *the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.** They have the same spirit and life with Christ; and therefore they are in their place and measure like unto him. It is also their great desire to be more and more like unto him; and for this purpose they are enabled to live more dependently upon him. As a man cannot be truly like Christ, but through him; so none are his, or at least have any visible token that they are his, but those who walk according to this rule, and who strive even to *perfect holiness in the fear of God.*

Through union with Christ, there is not only life, but *safety* by him. The head hath pre-eminently all the discerning faculties in it for the use of the body. Christ watches over his people; and his eye *is ever upon them and guides them.* He succors them by his almighty power; making his strength perfect and illustrious, in all their wants and weakness. No enemy can delude him, nor his elect, essentially, in him:† *No weapon, formed against either, shall prosper; and every tongue, that shall rise in judgement against them, will God con-*

* Col. ii. 19. † Matt. xxiv. 24.

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*demn. This is the heritage of the servants of Jehovah; and their righteousness is of me, saith Jehovah.**

And all this safety necessarily infers *victory, perseverance,* and everlasting *glory,* through this gracious Head and Redeemer. It is impossible for the whole creation to overcome the head; and therefore the members must prevail. As Christ *endureth ever;* so those, who are in him, shall also endure to the end and be saved. The inheritance, the kingdom, the crown, even, an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, are *reserved in heaven* for the joint-heirs of Christ, by the faithfulness and omnipotence of JEHOVAH their Saviour; and therefore there is an ineffable security for their faith and hope, that they shall not trust in vain, but that the believers themselves shall be *reserved* too, for the enjoyment of what their Lord hath promised to them.

O believer! to what an high and gracious state art thou called! How unworthy then would thy conduct be of such a gracious Lord, wert thou to go drooping and doubting all the day long! But how much more shameful, to prostitute a member of Christ to the drudgery and baseness of the devil!

No: love to Christ must follow, invariably, the knowledge and possession of him. If Christ be in us, *the body is dead,* or in a subdued state, *because of sin; but the spirit is life,* and life daily renewed, *because of righteousness.* "No man (says the judicious *Hooker*) is in Christ, but he in whom Christ *actually* is.†" And the actuality is chiefly discovered by the activity. Love

* Isa. liv. 17. † Eccl. Pol. B. v.

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is a swift and willing motion of the soul, which kindles every energy into quickness and diligence; and, consequently, they, who love Christ, will most chearfully *do the things that he says.* Their obedience will be from love, and very much according to the measure of it.

Next to this, the love to Christ's members will be a certain consequence of the love of his person. They will be loved for his sake and for their own. Our Lord taught us this love, when he taught us to pray. We are not directed to say, *My Father*, individually, though it be a truth; but, *Our Father*, in common with all his people: for each member, as a part of the whole, ought to pray for the whole body; as the whole body, in the same words, is enjoined to pray for every particular member. By this rule, a reciprocal affection is inculcated; and, by this practice, it is diffused and maintained. The great affection of the primitive disciples astonished their adversaries, and drew from them that honorable testimony; "See how these Christians love one another!" They called each other (following the scripture) by the endearing name of *brethren* and *sisters;* till, in short, their *fellowship* and *brotherhood* were titles, which stood for and signified *the* CHURCH *itself.* Amiable example! The bitter hatred and persecution of the world gave only a contrast of shade to that fair and blessed light, which it could not obscure or destroy.

Something of this kind not unfrequently occurs in the meeting of real Christians, who perhaps never heard of or saw each other before in their lives. An hint about Christ or his salvation, like a spark of fire, shall kindle the

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the flame of fellowship; and the discourse, drawn out into the detail of heart-felt experience, shall confirm a regard, to which the men of this world are strangers, and of which they are surprized to hear. An instance of this kind, I well remember, passed a few years since in a foreign land; which, though it hath been already published, I will take leave to insert in this place, as one proof among many of the remark, which I have been making.

Some years ago an English gentleman, by a particular providence, had occasion to be in North America, where, among other adventures, the following circumstance occurred to him, which is thus related in his own words.

"Every day's observation convinces me, that the children of God are made so by his own special grace and power, and that all means, whether more or less, are equally effectual with him, whenever he is pleased to employ them for conversion.

"In one of my excursions, while I was in the province of *New York*, I was walking by myself over a considerable plantation, amused with its husbandry, and comparing it with that of my own country, till I came within a little distance of a middle-aged negro, who was tilling the ground. I felt a strong inclination, unusual with me, to converse with him. After asking him some little questions about his work, which he answered very sensibly, I wished him to tell me, whether his state of slavery was not disagreeable to him, and whether he would not gladly exchange it for his liberty. "Massah, (said he, looking seriously upon me) I have wife and

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children; my massah takes care of them, and I have no care to provide any thing; I have a good massah, who teach me to read; and I read good book, that makes me happy." I am glad, replied I, to hear you say so; and pray what is the good book you read? "The Bible, massah, God's own good book?" Do you understand, friend, as well as read this book? for many can read the words well, who cannot get hold of the true and good sense. "O massah, says he, I read the book much before I understand; but at last I felt pain in my heart; I found things in the book that cut me to pieces." Aye, says I, and what things were they? "Why, massah, I found that I had bad heart; massah, a very bad heart indeed: I felt pain, that God would destroy me, because I was wicked, and done nothing as I should do. God was holy, and I was very vile and naughty; so I could have nothing from him but fire and brimstone in hell."—In short, he entered into a full account of his convictions of sin, which were indeed as deep and piercing as almost any I had ever heard of; and what scriptures came to his mind, which he had read, that both probed him to the bottom of his sinful heart, and were made the means of light and comfort to his soul. I then enquired of him, what ministry or means he made use of, and found that his master was a Quaker, a plain sort of man, who had taught his slaves to read, but who had not, however, even conversed with this negro upon the state of his soul. I asked him likewise, how he got comfort under all this trial? "O massah, says he, it was Christ gave me comfort by his dear word. He bade me come unto him, and he would give me rest, for

I was

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I was very weary and heavy laden." And here he went through a line of the most precious texts in the bible, showing me, by his artless comment upon them as he went along, what great things God had done in the course of some years for his soul. Being rather more acquainted with doctrinal truths, and the analogy of the Bible, than he had been, or in his situation could easily be; I had a mind to try how far a simple, untutored experience, graciously given without the usual means, could carry a man from some speculative errors; and I therefore asked him several questions about the merit of works, the justification of a sinner, the power of grace, and the like. I own, I was as much astonished at, as I admired, the sweet spirit and simplicity of his answers, with the heavenly wisdom that God had put into the mind of this negro. His discourse, flowing merely from the richness of grace, with a tenderness and expression, far "beyond the reach of art," perfectly charmed me. On the other hand, my entering into all his feelings, together with an account to him, which he had never heard before, that thus and thus the Lord in his mercy dealt with all his children, and had dealt with me, drew streams of joyful tears down his black face, that we looked upon each other, and talked with that inexpressible glow of Christian affection, that made me more than ever believe, what I have often too thoughtlessly professed to believe, *the communion of saints.* I shall never forget, how the poor excellent creature seemed to hang upon my lips, and to eat my very words, when I enlarged upon the love of Christ to poor sinners, the free bounty and tender mercy of God, the frequent and de-

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lightful sense he gives of his presence, the faith he bestows in his promises, the victories this faith is enabled to get over trials and temptations, the joy and peace in believing, the hope in life and death, and the glorious expectation of immortality. To have taken off his eager, delighted, animated, air and manner, would have been a masterpiece for a *Reynolds*. He had never heard such discourse, nor found the opportunity of hearing it, before. He seemed like a man who had been thrown into a new world, and at length had found company. Though my conversation lasted, at least, two or three hours, I scarce ever enjoyed the happy swiftness of time so sweetly in all my life. We knew not how to part. He would accompany me as far as he might; and I felt, on my side, such a delight in the artless, savory, solid, unaffected experience of this dear soul, that I could have been glad to see him often then, or to see his like at any time now. But my situation rendered this impossible. I therefore took an affectionate adieu, with an ardor equal to the warmest and the most antient friendship, telling him, that neither the colour of his body, nor the condition of his present life, could prevent him from being my dear brother in our dear Saviour; and that, though we must part now, never to see each other again any more in this world, I had no doubt of our having another joyful meeting in our Father's home, where we should live together, and love one another, throughout a long and a happy eternity. "Amen, Amen, my dear massah; God bless you, and poor me too for ever and ever." If I had been an angel from heaven, he could not have received me with more evident

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evident delight than he did; nor could I have considered him with a more sympathetic regard, if he had been a long-known Christian of the good old sort, grown up into my affections in the course of many years."

Happy world, if all were Christians! Or, at least, happy Christians, if they showed more of this fraternal affection to each other in the world? None can deny, that so it ought to be. O that every one, who names the name of Christ, and believes himself to be a member of his undivided body, would pray for faith and charity to put the whole into being!

Blessed Lord! Fountain of life and love, send forth the Spirit of thy Son into my heart and into the hearts of all my brethren; that, waving all mean and selfish distinctions, we may first love thee above all things, and then each other for thy sake with a pure heart fervently. Subdue animosities, and all the separating corruptions of the flesh, and let us consider ourselves as *brethren, fellow heirs* of the grace of life, persons who shall pass an eternity together, yea, as parts of each other, and *members*, holy JESUS, *of thy body, thy flesh, and thy bones.* Even so, let it be, for thy glory and for our present and eternal consolation through thy grace: Amen.

CHRISTIANS.

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CHRISTIANS.

An honorable title indeed, taken from the Redeemer himself! The disciples of the Lord *Jesus* were first called by this name at *Antioch*;* but the sense of the name belonged to the children of God from the beginning of the world. As the word CHRIST signifies ANOINTED, i. e. by the Holy Spirit; so the word *Christians* denotes properly those, and those only, who are *anointed* by the same Spirit, and thereby *follow him in the regeneration.* Thus the patriarchs were called *anointed,* because of their relation to the *Messiah,* (which is the Hebrew word for Christ:) *touch not mine* ANOINTED, *and do my prophets no harm.*† They were *Christians,* through faith in their Saviour, by *the unction of the* HOLY ONE; and none others have, in truth and reality, a right to the name. This *oil of gladness* first

* This was about the year of our Lord 44: before this time, the disciples were styled, in contempt, *Nazarenes* and *Galilæans.* And to show to us, that our Lord considers the reproach of the world as the truest honor; he made himself known to *Paul* at his conversion, by the despised name of *Jesus of Nazareth.* The *Jews,* therefore, in contemning Christ, and hating his people, have only brought upon themselves, in this instance, the fulfilment of that prophecy, which declared, that they should *leave their name* [the name of *Jew*] *for a curse unto* God's *chosen, and that the Lord God would slay them, and call his servants by* ANOTHER *name.* Isa. lxv. 15. † Psalm cv. 15.

descends

descends upon Christ, and then from him, the head and high-priest of the great profession, to the *meanest* and *lowest* of his true members, or to the *last* of them who shall come into the world, even to those who, in these respects, may be styled, in prophetic figure, *the skirts of his clothing.**

It appears from hence, that it is no such slight or common thing, as too many suppose, to be a Christian. If we consider the *Author:* it is the *gift* of God, and the *action* of God himself, upon that person, who is possessed of the truth implied by the name. If we consider the *blessing:* it is *an oil most holy,* as was declared in the type, by which the redeemed are consecrated; and never yet was thrown away upon men continuing ungodly and profane.† Those, who live under the dominion of sin, prove demonstrably, that it hath never yet been poured upon them. Wherever it is poured forth, it makes holy, and keeps holy. It is an oil of consecration, which devotes the soul to God, brings the soul by faith into the presence of God, enjoins him to walk continually as in that presence, admits him to communion and love with the Father and Son, enables him to live in the sense of the gracious privileges con-

* Psalm cxxxiii. 2. † This was signified by the precept; *upon man's flesh it shall not be poured,* Exod. xxx. 32. The corrupt flesh or nature of man is not the object of this unction; for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, because in the flesh dwelleth no good thing; but the new man, who is created anew in Christ Jesus, or is born again of the Spirit, is the only subject of this divine anointing, and is thereby made the priest consecrated to God, and capable of union and communion with him.

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ferred upon him, renews the mind into the image of Christ, causes it to rejoice in the holy and righteous will of Jehovah, and inspires a gracious longing and waiting for the purity as well as peace of the kingdom of glory. If something of this, at least, be not found in a man; or if, where supposed to be found, there be no strong desire for an increase of it; let such an one beware, lest, instead of being anointed with the Spirit of Christ, and being *sealed with the seal of God in his forehead*,* he *bear the mark only of the beast*, and be found among those that are *deceived*.† *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*: that is, he is not a Christian, and hath no right to the name.

He, who is anointed by the Spirit of Christ, or, what is the same, is a Christian indeed, hath the *mind* or understanding of Christ, discerns the truth of God in his word, apprehends the great analogy or proportion of faith which runs through the scriptures, tastes the sweet savour of the gospel, that *hidden manna, which none can know but he that eats it*, and rejects, as nauseous and vile, every false or adulterated principle, and all the *perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds*, who are *destitute* both *of the truth* and its power.

As the real Christian *hath an understanding which is true*, and which fixes his judgement upon all essential truth; so his will and affections are correspondent with it. He loves the things of God, and the people of God, without narrowness of spirit; because *the love of God is shed abroad in his heart* by that Holy One, who made

* Rev. ix. 4. † Rev. xix. 20.

him

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him a Christian. If God love any person or thing; how can he, who is of God, venture or be inclined to do otherwise?

The life of Christ also is *manifested in the mortal body* of every true Christian, subduing the corruptions of that body, and thereby delivering the soul from a multitude of snares and inquietudes. I (says the apostle, respecting the body, with its affections and lusts) *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live* [i. e. as to my soul;] *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*[*] He found *the second Adam*, the *Lord from heaven*, not like *Adam* the first, a mere *natural* man, but *the Lord of life* itself, and therefore *a quickening Spirit:* and he proved his interest in him, by *living upon him*, (not upon himself, or his own poor corrupted nature) and by *receiving out of his fulness*, from moment to moment, *grace for grace*. This is the life and spirit, the wisdom and strength, the happiness and holiness, of the Christian: and all the rest is nothing but *a fair show in the* FLESH, if it pretend to religion; or a foul show, if it follow the world.

The sum, then, of this matter is, that *the holy unction*, which makes a Christian, is the gift of God, and that the persons, who receive this grace, are devoted by it to God for ever, are renewed in the spirit of their minds, and from henceforth walk in the ways of truth and holiness, through the power and wisdom of that holy

[*] Gal. ii. 20.

unction,

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unction, according to the measure bestowed, till they reach the place of their destination in heaven.

The clear view and experience of this matter, confirmed and sealed by the Spirit of grace, afford an inestimable and invincible consolation to the soul. To know Christ, to be anointed by him, to be found in him, to live upon him, to receive continual supplies of strength, wisdom, love and righteousness from him, and to have the proof and demonstration of this, arising to the conscience and appearing in the life, forms such a conjunction of evidence as amounts to that *full assurance* of faith, hope, and understanding, which is the privilege, and must be the pursuit, of the children of God. It is this, which has animated many a heart under all the persecution and outrage of the world, and softened many a sick and dying bed, when nothing else could afford consolation. How often hath it been seen, that, while nature has been sinking, and the outward man, with his faculties, has lost all his strength; with an admirable vigor of joy the soul hath been enabled to rise, to exult, to triumph, to look forward into, and even to taste, the very nature and enjoyments of another world! These instances have not only often occurred, but may occur again and again; and perhaps may be found even in thee, O believer, who readest with longing concern any thing, which relates to the faithfulness of thy Lord, or to thy fellowship with him. Fear not; the promise is sure to all the seed, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee;* and whether the joy come to thee before death or not, thou wilt surely go to it in the next moment

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moment afterwards. Thou shalt then have, not only the fulness of joy, but the duration of it for ever.

And O what a scene shall then be presented to the expanded faculties of the soul, newly released from the house of clay; what a burst of glory fall upon the spirit of a Christian, on his abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom! It will be more than springing from a cold dark dungeon into the warm meridian day. The hand of God, which covered *Moses*, can then alone bear up the saint, though full of vigor by deliverance from sin, and alone enable him to sustain *the exceeding and eternal weight* of bliss and brightness, of which, as an heir come to age, he enters at once into the full possession. A gracious man, in the circumstance we call dying, felt such an anticipation of this unutterable blessedness, that, with some of the last efforts of his sinking voice, he could not help crying out; "O my God! O that joy! when shall I be with thee!"* —— Reader, may something like this be thy dying testimony to the truth and sweetness of JESUS's salvation, that others may be edified by the remembrance of thee, and be preparing to follow thee; whilst thou shalt be singing, in a higher world, as thou canst not sing here, the honor, the love, the mercy, the praise, of thy gracious Lord and God Redeemer!

* See BURNHAM's *Pious Memorials*, p. 111, second edition.

CHOSEN.

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CHOSEN.

THERE is scarce any one truth more manifest in the scriptures than this, that God hath an elect or chosen people, taken and redeemed from the world, and ordained through Christ to everlasting life and glory. It is declared, and continually declared, in word and deed, in doctrine and example, by the testimony of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, of Christ and of God, and by the concurrent effect and experience of its reality in the hearts of believers from age to age, who have known and rejoiced in his precious salvation. And yet, because of its opposition to the pride and blind conceit of fallen nature, no one truth is more offensive in itself, or more detested by those, who know not *the plague of their own hearts*, and who therefore scan all things by the line of a dark and corrupted reason. The self-sufficient spirit of the natural man cannot endure or submit to a truth, though it be God's own positive truth, which proposes to strip him of all his own consequence, and to lay him as a wretched, worthless, helpless, sinner in the dust of contrition and self-abhorrence. This "affronts his reason," affronts his dignity, affronts his nature, affronts all that is in him or belongs to him. He will struggle hard for a little, if but a little, portion, some little understanding, some little ability, natural at least if not moral,

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moral, in the business of salvation; and can never let go this proud and rotten principle of his corrupt and deluded heart, till divine power hath swept away both this and every other *refuge of lies* from within him. If he cannot, out of some reverence to the bible, go the length of *Sadducees* and *Pelagians*, and deny all manner of predestination; he will at least halve the matter with the *Pharisees* and *Semi-arminians*, and contend for a strong conjunction with it of man's own free-will and power. What a malicious indignation was stirred up in the hearts of the Jews, when our Lord preached the entire sovereignty of God, in passing by the widows of *Israel*, and selecting a Gentile widow of *Tyre* or *Sidon*; in rejecting the *Israelitish* lepers, and preferring such an one as NAAMAN the SYRIAN? Their souls seemed on fire by this declaration; and, being filled with bloody wrath, they attempted to destroy the Redeemer. And the heart of man is the same to this day: no one truth affects it with more enmity or bitterness. The writer of these lines freely owns, that he himself once hated it with a perfect hatred, and blasphemed it, by word and pen, with all his might. But God vouchsafed mercy, and so triumphed over the ignorance and unbelief of his mind, as to render that, which once was his scorn, one of the sweetest and most substantial grounds of all his peace.

This choice of God results from his own will; and the exercise of it superinduces, with a bland volition, the will of man. *Of his own will* (says the apostle) *begat he us*, &c. His children, respecting their spiritual or new birth, *are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor*

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nor of the will of man, but of God. And this will of God proceeds not according to the worth or excellency, either present or foreseen, in man; because nothing of this kind can be really in him, till God shall have been pleased to place it there: and therefore Christ says, *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes,* poor simple ones either found such or made such; and he gives no other reason or rule for this conduct but one, which ought to silence all the rash forwardness and presumption of man; *Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* Thus said *Jehovah* himself to *Moses; I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.* To this may be added the words of the apostle; *Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are; that no flesh should glory in his presence.* It is manifest, then, from these two or three texts, out of a thousand which might be quoted, that there is a people *chosen* to salvation out of the mass of mankind, (for, if *all* are redeemed, there can be no possible *choice* or *election* of *any*) and that all the causes of it are in God's free love and mercy on the one hand, and in his justice and holy judgement on the other. They, who will presume to go beyond or

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astray from these, in their representations of his conduct, do and must wander at their peril.

The proof of this truth also stands upon *fact*. What rendered ABEL's offering more acceptable that CAIN's? We are told by the Apostle, that it was *faith*. Heb. xi. Now, *faith is the gift of God*, which was bestowed upon him, and not upon his brother; and therefore it was, that the one was accepted and righteous, and the other left to the naked form of an empty profession. *Cain*, like the Pharisees in the gospel, brought his outward tythe or offering to God, and seemed willing to bring it; but bringing *that only*, and no faith with it, it was wholly an abomination to the Lord. So NOAH *found grace in the eyes of the Lord*. Gen. vi. 8. And thus he, likewise, became *a just man, and perfect* in his generations, walking with God*. It was the free grace of God, which called ABRAHAM, then an idolater, from his father's idolatrous house; which gave him faith to believe

* תמים—such, as the grace of God had made *complete* in Christ, and of the *perfect number* redeemed by him. The precious stones, in the breast-plate of the high-priest, on which the names of the tribes were engraved, were thus called.—There is another word משלם or שלם also translated *perfect*, which, applied to persons, denotes them *taught* of God, or *absolved* from their sins. The Jewish schools also used the word תמים for those disciples who had received their full and complete erudition, and were to be distinguished from the novices or mere tyros. In this sense the apostle employed the word τελειοι, in Phil. iii. 15. for persons who have made such a solid proficiency in divine things, as not to be carried away with *winds of doctrine*, nor to be seduced and baffled by the arts of men. The Pythagoreans also used the term τελειοι for those, who were fully initiated in the principles of their philosophy.

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the promise of selection to himself; which strengthened that faith against *staggering* in his future trials; and which enabled him, in the same faith, to seek a higher seed, and a better inheritance, than *Isaac* or *Canaan*. It was the appointment of God which ordained *Isaac*, and not *Ishmael*; which loved *Jacob*, and not *Esau*; even before they were born, and had done neither good nor evil, to render them heirs of promise and salvation. By the same grace of God, *Judah* was preferred to *Reuben* the first-born, and *Joseph*, for the time, to all his brethren. Upon the same principle, *Moses* (receiving his name as an emblem of God's people, who are all *drawn* by his appointment *out of the water*, or mass of the people in the world) was ordained of God to plead the cause of Israel, though he was not naturally *eloquent, but slow of speech, and of a slow tongue*. God overcame this impediment, strengthened the feebleness of age (for he was then fourscore) and enabled him both then and through the course of his life to do, what fallen unassisted nature never could have done, even to refuse a kingdom and the honors of this world, to choose rather to suffer affliction, and to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. In a word, passing over other private examples, such as those of *David*, *Jeremiah*, the apostles, &c. God's free-will chose the people of *Israel* in general, from among and out of the people of the world, as a prophetic and emblematic nation, which should exhibit in many respects the course of his conduct towards the true and spiritual Israel: and these were expressly chosen, not because they were better or more numerous than others, but because *the Lord chose them*

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to be a special people unto himself,* and only because it pleased him so to do, even though they were a *stiff-necked people*, and consequently had no right more than others to his favor.

This great truth, then, of the election of grace stands upon the *record* of God, and upon the *action* of God. It by no means is referable to human reason or capacity, and needs no justification from it. The Lord never intended, that the intellect of angels should comprehend his wisdom, into which at the most they can only *pry*: and how much less then can the darkened, depraved reason of man sit in judgement upon it? Of this we may be sure, because he himself hath assured us, that God cannot say or do what is wrong, whether we comprehend it or not.

If it be asked, as it hath often been asked, "What becomes of all other people, who are not the subjects of this election?" No answer can or ought to be given, than what the voice of inspiration has afforded, and what an apostle observed; *What have I to do to judge them that are without?—Them that are without, God judgeth.*† Is MY OWN *election sure?*

Believers know, and are ever ready to own with humble gratitude, that God *began* with them, not they with God;‡ that it was of his mercy alone he saved and

 called

* Deut. vii. 6, &c, ix. 4, &c. † 1 Cor v. 12, 13.

‡ It is the just remark of an able writer, that "some there are, so unhappy as to mistake the œconomy of God, both in the *natural* and *moral* world. If you will take their judgment, God, as a natural ruler, is to have the task of moving these portions of matter,

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called them, plucking them as *brands from the fire*, and *quickening them from the death of sin;* that they had no inclination to him till his grace bestowed it, but, on the contrary, a total alienation in all their faculties and powers; that he gave them life from the dead through Christ, and maintains it in them by Christ, insomuch that, spiritually and towards God, they cannot properly be said to live by themselves, or by their own strength, wisdom or faithfulness, but that *Christ liveth* in them; that all their graces are his gifts from their first seed to their final consummation, Christ being the *alpha* and *omega* of the whole; that all this, consequently, must have proceeded from the free love of God, in taking them and leaving others; that this free love must have risen from himself, because they had nothing previously to its manifestation in them, but sin and wretchedness in their whole nature, and were thereby incapable of changing, or desiring to change, their state; that God knowing all this, for all things are known to him from the foundation of the world, he could not act in this case upon contingency or accident, nor suffer the pre-

matter, which are moved and ruled by the sun, the work of his hands: while man is to assume the office of *the Father of spirits*, and administer light to his own understanding. In *religion*, which is the province of the Deity, and where there is a *dignus vindice nodus*, all is to be *natural;* but, in *nature*, all effects are to be miraculous. Thus wretchedly will men reason, when they think philosophy hath advanced men into a sphere, superior to the unphilosophizing simplicity and truth of divine revelation." See a very ingenious and excellent work, entitled *An Essay on the first Principles of Natural Philosophy*, by the Rev. W. Jones, p. 239.

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cious blood of Christ to be hazarded in its efficacy; and that, consequently, he *foreknew his people*, the subjects of that efficacy, and the purchase of that blood, and, foreknowing them, he also did *predestinate them to be conformed to the image of his Son;* and *whom he did predestinate them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us*, and hath wrought all this in us, *who can be against us*, or of what avail is human contradiction or resistance?*

The believer doth not ascend up into heaven to know, whether his name be *written in the Lamb's book of life;* but *the word*, and the proof and experience of his interest in the word and all that it reveals of grace and glory, is *nigh him, in his mouth*, and *in his heart*. He proves his

 election

* All these things being duly and graciously considered, there seems to be no foundation for the novel and metaphysical distinction between the moral and natural ability of condemned and perishing sinners, who therefore have *no sufficiency of themselves* so much as to think one good thought, and much less to put it into exercise. Two or three passages of scripture cut the controversy very short, to the no small mortification of that proud and unsubdued reason, which naturally affects rather to see and dispute than to trust and believe. *All that the Father giveth me* SHALL COME *to me.* This is election and effectual vocation. *Therefore they* COULD NOT *believe,* BECAUSE *he* [God] *hath blinded their eyes*, &c. This is the preterition or reprobation. Now, both this choice and this rejection are simply and repeatedly, in these and other scriptures, applied to God; not merely as the *deficient* but *efficient* cause, and certainly without implying that he is or can be the author of sin. If, then, one part of mankind, *must* come

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election by his vocation; as the worldling proves his reprobation by his final impenitency. God having raised the believer from the death of sin through Christ, or made him a partaker of Christ's resurrection, he liveth to God, and upon God in Christ with faith and holiness, and thus *rejoices in hope*, that, God having *renewed him in the spirit of his mind*, and *drawn him with loving-kindness* and mercy, THEREFORE *he hath loved him with an everlasting love*. This argument, standing upon the immutability and eternity of the Godhead, holds firmly in all its parts, and, in conjunction with his revealed will, looks backward and forward with equal truth and force. He, that loved without beginning, will love without end. He that contrived to save his elect, when sinners, *from* all eternity, will preserve them, when saved and made saints, *to* all eternity. And God hath revealed this plain theory, as a clue to the progression of our experience, and as a ray of light for our comfort; and none can consistently oppose it, but those who have no interest in the matter. If such, following their own corrupt reason, indulge themselves

come, because God hath *ordained* that they *shall* come; and that others *cannot* come, because he, who hath rejected the whole world of fallen angels, hath rejected that part of fallen men; who and what is the daring worm, who can venture to dispute, by his blinded reason, against the holy and supreme determination of God? Who is wicked enough to say to him, *What doest thou?* Who is presumptuous enough, by distinctions coined to please the corrupt imaginations of men, to fritter away or obscure the positive and plain declarations of him, who can do nothing *but what is right*, and *who*, beyond his own will, *giveth not account of any of his matters?*

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in the deepest speculations upon this subject which reason is capable of; they may puzzle themselves indeed, but can conclude nothing certain, apart from divine revelation, but this one thing, that they have attempted to be wise *above* what is written, through the rebellion of their minds *against* what is written.

To real Christians, "to godly persons and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, the godly consideration of predestination and our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant and unspeakable comfort;" and to such only, because they experience the thing, and enjoy it, not as a curious dry speculation, but as a perceptible fact. For this end, Christ himself was the chosen, or elect, of God, with respect to his human nature, that he might be the head over all things to his church; and his church, the proper members of that head were *chosen in him*, and *ordained*, that they might make up one body, one building, one temple, in the Lord. What perfection of arrangement, what certainty, what comfort, what dignity, in the clear view and divine perception of this great plan, in which JEHOVAH in his persons and offices stands immutably engaged, are seen to appertain to the whole houshold of faith, and to every individual member and branch of the sacred family! The excellency of such an object is enough to charm the heart into the love of it, and always charms it indeed, when, through grace, the beauty of the workmanship and the glorious faithfulness of the divine agent are experimentally known.

O how wonderful is the love, how full of condescension and mercy, which could rescue so worthless a worm, as

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I naturally am, from the jaws of destruction! which could rescue me too at so great a cost, as the sufferings and death of the Son of God; and all this, not by such an accidental pity over my misery as might or might not have considered my deplorable state, but by an all-wise, an all-perfect, an everlasting design, planned in the councils of the Almighty, before this world and this nature of mine were made! Who can express the debt I owe to Father, Son, and Spirit, the triune Godhead, for enrolling my poor name in the covenant of grace; for recording my wants, my peace, my salvation, in the heavenly records; for writing all I am and all I hope for in the Lamb's book of life, indelibly as *on the rock for ever!* The confidence, the assurance, which the Lord hath afforded of this perfect and unalterable mercy, what world, what millions of worlds, can counter-balance or purchase? And how much do I loose, how poorly do I live, when the sense of this glorious favor, this inestimable good, doth not dwell in me richly in all the wisdom and truth of the word of God? This persuasion was an apostle's joy, that he knew WHOM he had believed, that he was able to keep all that he had committed to him, and that nothing should separate him from the love of Christ; and O that it may be mine! May I look back from the present instance of thine effectual calling, O my God, to that provision of thine to which nothing could be unknown, and to that pre-ordination without which no good could arise, and bless and adore thee, that, weak and worthless as I am in myself, thou didst choose me in my Redeemer before the world began, *that I should be holy and without blame before thee in love, according to*

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to the good pleasure of thy will, and that I should *obtain salvation through Jesus Christ* to thy glory! O that this dignity, to which I am thus bountifully raised, may impress my heart with grateful awe, and wonder, and love; and may I be enabled to show, that indeed I am thus raised to be a king and a priest in the regions of immortality, by a gracious superiority over self, the world, and sin. May this true greatness and sublimity of mind, very remote in its nature from the false and foolish pride of a fallen heart, lead me to just reflections upon my spiritual station, and make me very careful not to disgrace it by improper company, thoughts, words, or actions. And as *the throne of glory, the height from the beginning, is the place of my sanctuary*;* may I have life and power continually dealt out to me, from the divine fulness, to walk worthy of the high vocation wherewith I am called! May I have a noble contempt for every thing, which would either stop my course or deaden my heart, in my passage towards my crown; and may I learn more and more to count all things but dung and dross, when put in competition with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord! Thus may I walk as *the elect of God* on earth, and at length obtain my incorruptible inheritance with the fellow-members of my Saviour's mystic body, when I shall be both perfectly like to him in all things, and (to give a full emphasis to all my joy) shall for ever be with him!

* Jer. xvii. 12.

ADOPTED.

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ADOPTED.

PERSONS, adopted into a family, were, according to antient laws, entitled to all the privileges, and subject to all the restrictions, which children of the same blood could claim as their inheritance.*

Agreeable to this well-known transaction in common life, God is represented as the great adopter of those, who are brought into the bond of the covenant, and made partakers of its blessings. They were once of another family, or rather of no family at all, being, like *Cain*, vagabonds, fugitives, wanderers, in the mental sense, upon the wilderness of this earth, *in a solitary way, finding no city to dwell in*;† but God, who is rich in mercy, took them from this fearful state, adopted them into his family, and provided for them accordingly. He found them filthy; but he made them clean: he knew them to be enemies; but he turned them into friends: he gave them the Spirit of his children, filling their hearts with love and gratitude to himself, and with cordial affection to all that belong to him.

They could not, being enemies, adopt themselves: they had no more inclination than power for any such

* See more concerning the nature and privileges of adoption, in *Hor. Solit.* Vol. ii. p. 241. † Ps. cvii. 4.

blessing.

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blessing. The design, the act, the accomplishment, were altogether of JEHOVAH, who foreknew them, when to no creature they could possibly be known, and foreordained them to be saved by that immaculate Lamb, who, for their sakes, in the purpose and sight of God, was a *Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world.* These are *the brethren beloved, who know their election* to be *of God;* and to these *the gospel came not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.*

This great truth the men of the earth cannot understand or commune with, and therefore seek and expect no interest in it. But it is the clear and sweet voice of that unerring wisdom, which is justified of all her children. The creation of the world itself is not more expressly revealed, than this adoption of the children of God from among the men of the world. The scorn of the multitude demonstrates that they have no apparent interest in the thing; and their having no interest proves, if there be such a matter as salvation, that *the few, who find it,* must have found it according to the choice or adoption, revealed in the scripture and enforced from heaven.

But wherefore wert thou chosen and adopted, O my soul; while many, to all appearance better, or at least not possibly worse by nature, than thou art, have been neglected or left? What reasons canst thou perceive in thyself, why the Lord should set his love upon thee, and not upon thy neighbour or thy friend, who perhaps have not erred and strayed farther or so far from him? Why was one blaspheming thief taken for an heir of salvation,

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salvation, and his fellow, not worse than himself, left to perish in his sins? Why was the harlot *Mary Magdalene*, who was possessed completely by the devil, accepted to grace; while many of the chaste and sober matrons of *Israel* found no regard? Why were the learned, the devout, the scrupulous *Pharisees* sentenced to wrath; and the ignorant fishermen, the extorting publicans, the careless sinners, reclaimed and saved?—Lord, I can give no reason for all this conduct of thine, but what thou thyself hast been pleased to give: *Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight!* ALL must have perished, but for thy mercy: it is of thy free grace, and according to thy sovereign will alone, that ANY are *plucked as brands from the burning*. They must have been consumed with the rest, if thy power had not rescued them from the fire.

Keep me then, O my God, from nice inquisitions, or rather from presumptuous determinations, upon the motives and rules of thy conduct, which thou hast not revealed; but cause me meekly to submit to the conduct itself, which must be holy and good, because it is thine. O may I be thankful, with *the generation of thy children*, for finding the tokens of thy blessed adoption upon me. May I cherish them in my heart. May they be considered as my true riches and estate. May they lead my soul to humble and hearty adoration of thee, and to full resignation of all I am and have, to thy righteous and all-governing will. Let me wonder and admire, with tears of joy, and with the most glowing sensations of love, that thou shouldest condescend to save and to adopt me, a creature in myself altogether vile

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vile and impure, helpless and forlorn. It was thy doing, and thine alone; and it is marvellous in my eyes. But that thou shouldest design for me, and by thy holy word assure me, that thou hast designed also, not merely a deliverance from sin and from hell, but a crown of glory, a kingdom prepared, a royal priesthood, an everlasting throne, and all these as my own unalienable inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading:—— Lord, what can I more say; or how shall I think of this without rapture and awe! Touch my heart as thou didst the heart of thy servant *David*, and cause me, like him, to sing with a melody beyond the reach of sounds; *Blessed be thou,* JEHOVAH, *the* ALEHIM *of Israel, our Father, for ever and ever. Thine, O* LORD, *is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth, is thine: thine is the kingdom, O* LORD, *and thou art exalted as* HEAD *above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now, therefore, our* GOD, *we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.**

* 1 Chron. xxix. 11—13.

HEIRS.

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HEIRS.

As the title *adopted* shows the *free grace* of God in taking his people out of the mass of mankind; this name *heirs* expresses the *right* of his people, in consequence of that grace, to all the blessings of salvation, which compose their great inheritance.

This right is founded in the purchase of Christ, who is a person in JEHOVAH, and therefore able to pay down an infinite price for an endless glory to the Godhead; and who is also perfect man, and therefore the proper head of his redeemed, in and through whom they may receive what he wrought out and obtained for his own human nature, and for them in union with it. The price was his *blood* and *righteousness;* and thus the one is called the *blood of God*, because of the union of the two natures in one person; and the other is named, *the righteousness of Jehovah*, and himself *Jehovah their righteousness*, because of its infinite perfection, and because of their eternal interest both in it and in him.

He bestows the inheritance upon them, *who are given to him of the Father;* and these he calls emphatically *his own.*

It comes therefore to them as a matter of *rightful purchase* by their Redeemer of the Father, and as an estate of *gracious gift* from the Redeemer, in conjunction with

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with the will and influence of the Spirit and the Father. Thus, they are *heirs of God*, both by adoption and purchase; and *joint-heirs with Christ*, as to his humanity, of all, which that humanity can possibly possess in glory. Their title is strong and sure; and all the attributes of Jehovah are engaged, by covenant among the divine Persons themselves, and by their oath upon the divine record, to make it good to the believers in Jesus, who are therefore significantly styled, THE HEIRS OF SALVATION.

The inheritance cannot be lost; and the heirs of the inheritance are equally certain. They receive it, not merely because God is merciful, but because he is *just* and *cannot deny himself*. They are in Christ, and under the covenant of his peace, by whom and by which alone all the divine attributes can harmonize in the salvation of a sinner: out of Christ and this covenant, Jehovah, is a just God indeed; and, therefore, to every sinner, nothing but *a consuming fire*.

In this present life, these heirs of salvation are newborn, or regenerated with a new nature, from the Holy Spirit. When this great work takes place, the old *Adam*, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, begins to die in them; and they are renewed and quickened daily, with increase of life or growth in grace, for a more perfect consummation. They are here, as heirs in their minority, under tutelage and guardianship, until the time appointed to every one of them by the Father. They need discipline; and they have it. The correction improves them; which shows the wisdom and love that sent it, and also demonstrates, that they are, not bastards,

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bastards, but sons. All this takes place within them, not to give them a title to heaven, nor yet to augment that title; but to demonstrate, that they have really an interest in it, and that the title, which always rests in Christ, as its proper foundation, is extended with its happy effects unto them. Without this particular extension, they might talk of a title, and might have *a name to live;* but they would be dead before God, and would have no real possession of or right to any thing.

When they are of age, which with God is measured not by years but by designation and fitness, they are translated from their present mean condition into the full enjoyment of their estates. Death strips off the garments of corruption and bondage; and, immediately upon their entrance into glory, they are *clothed upon* with life and immortality. We know not, and cannot know, what that dress, that inheritance, fully is: but if we could now by our present faculties know them, it is very certain, they must be much meaner than they are, and consequently less worthy of Christ's purchase and our enjoyment.

Probably, the state of angels will be inferior to that of the redeemed. Of them it is never said, that they are to *be one in the Father and Son,* and partakers of *the glory* of the Messiah. They are called *ministring spirits,* and represented as attendants upon the heirs of salvation. One, who not only lay upon, but saw deeply into, the bosom of his master, hath told us; *Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like*

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*like him; for we shall see him as he is.** It was well said by a gracious man; "How little do the mourning attendants of believers think, what visions of God, what ravishing sights of Christ, the souls of their departed friends may have, while they are closing their eyes with tears!"

Christian reader, I cannot tell thee the greatness of thine inheritance, for it is infinite; nor its worth, for it is inestimable; nor its blessedness, for it is unspeakable; nor its duration, for it is everlasting. But I can tell thee, upon the best authority, that it is *sure to all the seed*, and that, if thou art one of them, it is infallibly sure to thee. If thou art called by grace, if sin be thy hate and thy load, if thou live by faith, if thou walk with Christ, if thy hope and expectation be only in him, if earth be thy wilderness and thou art kept in due measure unspotted from the world, if heaven be thy home, and thy heart burn within thee at times to be there:—these are signs and tokens, which the devil puts not upon his children, nor which the world endures; these are pledges and proofs, that thou art an heir of the kingdom, and that the kingdom itself shall be thine. Go on, blessed soul, go on, and fight the good fight of faith, and hold fast, through the arm which sustains thee, and thus hold out unto the end. Soon shalt thou hear those animating words, *Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!*

* 1 John iii. 2.

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BORN OF GOD, OR REGENERATE.

THIS title is given to the redeemed, in order to distinguish their present from their former state, and their persons from all other men, as born naturally of the offspring of *Adam*. It implies that great doctrine of *regeneration*, which is so offensive to the world, and the peculiar privilege of God's children in being redeemed from it.

The absolute necessity of experiencing this truth in order to salvation is most forcibly stated by our Lord in those memorable words: *Verily, verily, I say unto thee* (Nicodemus,) *Except a man be born again*, or from above, *he cannot* SEE *the kingdom of God;* and again; *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot* ENTER *into the kingdom of God.**

The people of God are naturally born as all other men, and, till they are *new-born*, have the same spirit which is in the men of the world, and live like them in error of life and darkness of mind. *Who maketh them to differ*, at length, *from others?* No answer doth the scripture afford than this; *They are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of*

* John iii. 3, 5.

God.

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*God.** They could not contribute to their own natural birth, though other human agents might and did; but, in this case of spiritual life, both their own will and the will of man, the will of all flesh, the constitution of nature itself and its life, signified by the blood, are wholly excluded from the primary cause, which is entirely referred to that divine Agent, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

This is a sore grievance to the world, and to the wisdom and powers of fallen man, who cannot endure *the exclusion of boasting:* but it is God's word, and his inviolable truth, notwithstanding. It is revealed as doctrine; and it is confirmed by fact.

Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? This question to *Nicodemus* might be offered to thousands, who are learned like him; but can receive no answer from reason, darkened and doubtful reason, which for a guide, though blind in these matters, is the only guide they desire. Another instructor must unfold the mystery of that wisdom, *which none of the princes or great men of this world knew* or can know. Our Lord teaches us, *how* any man attains this gracious information. *I thank thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth* [this marks his sovereignty;] *because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither knoweth any*

* John i. 13.

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*man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.**

Here we behold the *cause* of regeneration; and now we may contemplate the *nature* of it, and, finally, its *effects.*

Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? The question returns, and is equally applicable to *Nicodemus*, and to all others, who have studied their bibles. "It is no new doctrine, which I declare unto you, though new to and ever unattainable by carnal reason. The principle of it is evident in the faith and grace of *Abel:* the operation is expressly delineated in the book and experience of *Job.*"

God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. He is ever speaking by his word. He cometh at last *in visions of the night*, after the manner of the Old Testament dispensation, *and openeth the ears of men*, which before were *stopped*, and *sealeth their instruction* by the seal of his Spirit; *that he may draw man from his work* [מעשׂה] his own purpose and designs, *and hide pride from man. Thus he keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from the overpassing sword*, which, as in type the Egyptians, shall ere long destroy the unbelieving world. *He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain:* Thus he hath no rest from the deep and thorough conviction of his sin. *So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat;* that which he formerly lived on, that which engrossed his whole delight and desire. *His flesh*

* Matt. xi. 25—27.

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is consumed away, that it cannot be seen, and his bones, that were not seen, stick out. The flesh, with all its wisdom and glory, is subdued and put out of sight for hope and help; and all the strength of its unrighteousness, denoted by its bones, now manifestly appears. *Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.* He is almost overwhelmed with despair, and seems ready to perish for his sins.—This is the first work of the divine Spirit, inducing the conviction of sin by his pointed application of the just and holy law. And the same is described, under the several images of helpless solitude, piercing hunger and thirst, miserable darkness and bondage, the shadow of death, horrible confinement and sickness, fearful tempests and agitations upon mighty waters, and other concomitant circumstances, in the cviith Psalm.

When the soul is thus mercifully, though painfully, brought low in itself; then the Holy Spirit exhibits the means of salvation. The circumcising knife of the law, in the hands of the divine Agent, is spiritually the introduction to the new covenant of grace and peace through Jesus Christ. And now the *Benoni* becomes a *Benjamin.*

Then there is, or appears, *with him,* or over him, *the* ANGEL-INTERPRETER, the advocate, or paraclete, *one among a thousand,* one exalted above his brethren, *to show unto man his uprightness,* or how God can be just, and yet the justifier of him, that believeth in Jesus. *And he* [the Angel-interpreter] *is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom* [כפר] a propitiation.—This is the second

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branch of the Spirit's office thus to *take of the things of Jesus, and show,* or enforce, *them* to the soul.

The great *result* is the renewal of the believer. *His flesh* (like *Naaman's* at his baptism in *Jordan,* which also preached this great truth) *shall be fresher than a child's;* he shall *receive the kingdom of God as a child,* or *new-born babe: he shall be returned to the days of his youth,* or be more holy in God's sight than before the fall. *He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him, and he shall see his face with joy; for he will render unto man his righteousnes;* i. e. either pronounce him righteous, or transfer his righteousness to him. *He looketh upon men, and (if any) say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light;* or, in the light [in Christ, who is the light of life] his life shall be seen. *Lo, all these things* GOD WORKETH שלש פעמים, *in three gradations,* or *concussions, with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.**

* Job xxxiii. 14—30. The symbols, in Lev. ix. preach the same truth in another form. It would exceed the compass of a note to go through the whole chapter; but the serious reader will probably not be displeased with a few hints on its spiritual sense and meaning. *V.* 1. On the *eighth* day, so called because a day of *grace* and acceptance, in which believers, through the sacrifice of Christ for sin, enter into a *new* state or condition with God; the people were to present themselves before the Lord. *V.* 9. And they were to come through faith in the *strength* of Christ to save, and to lay no *foundation* for acceptance but in his blood poured forth. *V.* 10, 11. Putting off also the old man, with his affections and lusts: *V.* 14. And obtaining the washing of regeneration to the praise of God's glory. *V.* When believers are thus atoned for, and

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This is God's work of regeneration; and this is a very antient description of its mode, its effects, and its experience. The New Testament is full of this important truth, as well as the Old, in all the distinctions between flesh and spirit, the new man and the old, the outward and the inner man, the sheep and the goats, the darkness and the light, life and death, nature and grace, and, in a word, between almost every thing which concerns the life of redemption in the soul of man, and the death of sin which is opposite to it. Without this true μετανοια, or *change of mind*, no sinner born of *Adam* can either obtain salvation, or be capable of enjoying it.

By this description in *Job*, by other testimonies in the word of God, and by the concurrent experience of the redeemed, this great business, the greatest which the soul can know, is not begun or carried on, by carnal reasoning or moral suasion, but by a divine power, inserting a new life descending from Christ, and increased and supported by communion with him. Thus the Apostle: *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of*

and renewed, and justified; they ascribe all *authority* and *power* over them to Jehovah; *v.* 19. and to him alone, wholly *disclaiming themselves*: *v.* 20. And this they do *sincerely* and from their very *breasts*: *v.* 21. testifying it *openly* and *on every side* before the world. *V.* 22. And then they feel the *blessing* of their great High-Priest upon their souls; which ends, *v.* 23. in the *vision* and *enjoyment* of the *divine glory*, and, *v.* 24. in their *final acceptance* by Jehovah.—This is a slight sketch of the gospel, as contained in Exodus and Leviticus, which books, to the gracious mind duly instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom and in the holy tongue which reveals them, *speak none other things* than the evangelists in their gospels.

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the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Nor is this of *private interpretation*, or a circumstance peculiar to the apostle alone; but the common privilege and experience of all who, like him, are born of God. It is the portion of the whole *generation of God's children*, who, like other children, have one family-likeness and common life, and who derive from him, their Father in Christ, that life and likeness, by which they resemble him and each other. They are the sons of God, because they are born again of him, who is God, and who is not ashamed, great and glorious as he is, to call and to own them for his children. This general assembly of the first born [i.e. God's own born] will be an innumerable family when collected together, according to that remarkable prophecy concerning Christ: *Thy people shall be willing* [or free-willingness itself] *in the day of thy power, in*, or with, *the beauties of holiness: From the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth*; or, as Bishop *Lowth* has rendered it, *more than the dew from the womb of the morning is the dew of thy progeny.**

* Ps. cx. 3. "It was the opinion of the antient Jews, that the resurrection would be effected by means of a certain dew, of a plastic power, from heaven, as it is written in the *Jerusalem* Talmud and Jelcudi." *Manasse Ben Israel* in *Humphreys's* Diss. upon Athenag. p. 15. Possibly the notion is founded upon Isaiah xxvi. 19. *Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.* See Hos. xiv. 6. and Pocock in *Port. Mos.* p. 117. The spiritual sense of the image, in the above passage of the Psalm, is very beautiful, and testifies, that as the dew is to herbs, so is Christ to his people, and that more than the drops of dew from the womb of the morning is the number of his chosen. In reality, the

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The *effects* of this regeneration are produced by the Holy Spirit, as well as regeneration itself. He worketh both *to will and to do of his good pleasure.* The cause, the action, and the effect, are all of him. As that, which is born of the flesh, is flesh, gross, sensual, and unclean; so that, which is born of this Spirit, is spirit, refined, pure, and heavenly. The one is entirely sinful, and born in sin: the other is strictly holy, being born, or new-created, in righteousness and true holiness of HIM, who is absolutely perfect and holy. They live indeed together in one individual man while here below; but they are absolutely contrary to each other. Rom. vii.

Each of these natures hath also its distinct and peculiar understanding. The mind of the flesh is what is usually called *rational,* but which the scripture terms *sensual,* because it is occupied, and can only be occupied to purpose, in sensible and material things. Hence it is not only corrupt through the fall, but dark and doubtful, even upon the substances obvious to the senses, and much more so upon affairs intellectual or divine. The mind of the spirit, as renewed of God and actuated by him, is spiritual, and is now the only faculty by which spiritual things can be truly known or discerned. These

the only true phœnix, so much talked of by the antients, is found verified in every real Christian: out of the death of sin in him rises up the life of righteousness; and from the death of the body springs the resurrection to life eternal.

As to the sleep of the soul, it is an opinion very contrary to the Scriptures, which represent men as *going out of* or *putting off* the body; but this would be absurd, if the soul lay down and slept in it; and the separation of body and soul, in that case, would also be impossible.

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things, though proceeding from the wisdom of God himself, are *foolishness* to the carnal mind of the natural man, because he cannot apprehend them; just as a conversation in foreign language, or some mathematical problems, would appear but as gibberish or impossibilities to an unlettered clown. There must be a faculty suited to the object; or the object is inapplicable and useless. This faculty is termed *the new man*, because it is not inherent, but brought into our nature by regeneration: it is the holy principle, which the Holy Spirit produces, and by which it acts upon the soul. It is the *nexus* or bond, by which the spirit of a man, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, is brought into union with Christ, and through Christ with the Father.*

In this mortal state, clogged and circumvented as the children of God are with sensuality and sin, they can discern but little, compared with what they shall know hereafter, of the things of God: and the men of the

* The Spirit of God is indeed *every where*, but yet, in a certain sense, not *in* all men, such as the *sensual* or *reprobates*, nor *in* all spirits, such as the fallen angels. They have, it is true, a life from God, and are supported by him as creatures, or they must cease to be: but he is not that life to them, which he is to saints and pure spirits, and which can and doth subsist either with or without the life natural. The air of the world is the medium or instrument of life to all creatures upon it, and is also the material emblem of the invisible Spirit; but this air, though always filling both live and dead animals and vegetables, carries on no act of life in a dead plant or a dead body. So the Holy Spirit is, in one respect, within the deadest sinner, knowing and searching the thoughts and intents of his corrupt heart; but it will easily be allowed, that, as he cannot mix with the corruption he finds there, so it is an awful fact, that his presence in that way imparts neither spiritual life nor salvation.

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world know nothing *truly* of them at all. In that future state, when every film will be removed from the mental eye, and every other obstruction done away; the apprehension, proportionate in some degree to the new and innumerable objects which may present themselves, shall be inconceivably sharpened and enlarged. Perhaps, there may not only be a strengthening of the spiritual faculties which we already have, but an addition of others, concerning the nature of which we cannot now have the least conception or idea. As an oyster (for an instance or similitude taken from the natural world) cannot, with its one faculty of mere feeling, comprehend the senses of hearing and sight which men enjoy, and much less the sublime faculties of the human mind; so it is not impossible, but that the sons of God, upon their introduction to their perfect state, shall have powers to conceive, as well as find objects to be conceived, of a nature, subtlety, variety, and employment, which at present almost infinitely transcend their utmost stretch of thought and imagination. Of this, however, we are very sure, because God himself hath said it; that *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*, either here or hereafter.

And is this thine expectation and thine end, O thou favoured child of God? Hath God done such great things for thee; and hath he prepared more than thou canst either ask or think? Then, why is *the king's son lean from day to day?* Ought he not to hope and conclude, with the sweet singer of *Israel; Why art thou cast down, O my soul; and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou*

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thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.

To the real believer every day's mercies bring with them fresh motives and arguments for gratitude and praise. He lives by faith; and the faith by which he lives, or which, as to its principle, is life itself from Christ, is the first great mercy which he can spiritually experience, and the pledge and introduction of all the rest. Without faith he cannot truly understand, or properly use any one of them; and therefore, for this cause as well as others, without faith it is impossible to please God. If thou hast this faith in thine heart, O reader, thou art a Christian, and *alive from the dead.* If thou art a Christian, thou art in Christ, and entitled to all that he hath purchased and provided. Thou art, in that case, united to him, and dear to his heart. Whatever afflicts thee, he feels it in his love and over-rules it by his wisdom. Thou art not too low for his highest and most endearing thoughts. If a sting, almost invisible, wound the meanest member of thy body; thy whole frame is awakened and concerned; and thine eye, thine hand, thy mind, are directed to minister relief. Infinitely more so is thy Head, the Lord of thy light and life, alive to thy sorrows and to all thy concerns. Their causes and tendencies may escape thy notice; but they escape not his. He hath omniscience to superintend, and omnipotence to support, the poorest and the feeblest member of his mystic body. He noticed thee, and marked thee for his own; or thou never couldest have lifted up an eye of faith and confidence towards him. Then, for whom he hath thus called,

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will he not care? will he bestow his life on thee for no end? can he forget what he hath suffered, and for whom he hath died? if he hath called thee by his grace, and thou seekest him, canst thou presume to imagine, that all this was a matter of chance, or rather that he did not first seek thee? if he sought thee, and blessed thee with the distinction of his mercy; is it possible, that this can go for nothing, or come to nothing?—Away with those thoughts of blasphemy, which neither become his love, nor thy privilege. Hope in him to the end. Let faith go forth after him, and him alone. It is the carnal reason of thy carnal mind, which fills thee with its doubts, as its own genuine offspring. Pray for strength and wisdom to put this *old Adam* down, and to keep him down. But let thy inner man look stedfastly to Jesus. By looking to and leaning upon him, thy light and thy life will brighten and increase, and consequently all thy spiritual comforts and desires. Thine evidences for glory will rise in proportion to the experiences of his grace. These experiences, concurring with his word, and sealed by his Spirit, are demonstrations of life eternal already begun. And what is thus begun by grace, shall by the same grace be continued, and in due time be perfected for everlasting glory.

CHILDREN

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CHILDREN OF GOD.

In these days of rebuke and blasphemy, when all sorts of false opinions are briskly circulated, and, through the dissoluteness of the times, have a rapid adoption from their suitableness to corrupt nature; I have often thought, that, besides the historical view I have elsewhere drawn up* of the heresies, which have been raised upon the doctrine of the divine persons in the Godhead, there are TWO grand points of Christian doctrine, to which it might be useful to give a comparison with the differences, held by a variety of persons, from them. They seem to be *criteria*, or touchstones, of principles, and involve conclusions of the greatest importance to the purity and happiness of the Christian life. The *one* is the FALL and DEPRAVITY OF NATURE; and the *other* the BEING and OPERATION of that GRACE, by which the soul is restored to God. Though it may lengthen this particular chapter beyond the usual extent of most others, I trust it will not be wholly unacceptable, if I treat the weighty subject of it with some difference of method. This difference will be chiefly historical; for I mean to relate something of the principal persons, who have propagated opinions upon the great

* *Horæ Solit.* Vol. I. p. 439. and Vol. II. p. 469. 3d. edit.

doctrines

doctrines above mentioned, and then to compare those opinions particularly with the doctrines themselves, as held by the greatest lights of the reformation.

When I would point out one of the first and greatest impugners of the doctrines of grace, the reader's mind will probably anticipate the name of PELAGIUS. His true name was *Morgan*, a British monk, who began to appear about the year 405. There was no outward blemish in his life and conversation; but he was esteemed, on the contrary, a man of remarkable piety and exemplary manners. His learning too was confessedly eminent: and his natural eloquence and understanding were such, as created general admiration. He had also a disciple and co-adjutor, named *Celestius*, almost equally considered for talents with himself, but much his superior in birth, being descended from an illustrious family in Scotland or Ireland.

These began to publish their opinions in some parts of Italy, if not in Rome, and drew away many disciples after them. When Rome was taken by *Alaric* the *Goth* in 410, they retired for about two years to Sicily, and then to Africa, infecting the whole country with their tenets, and especially the city of Carthage. But here first they received a public check. A council was called in 412, wherein the Bishop of Carthage presided, which condemned their principal error, in denying original sin, or rather the transmission of it from Adam to his posterity. Pelagius, who had previously departed to Palestine, escaped for a time the just censure which the council thought fit to pass upon his disciple Celestius.

In Palestine, by great address and extraordinary appearances

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pearances of sanctity, Pelagius found powerful advocates and numerous admirers. He even procured, by artful management, the decision of a council of fourteen Palestine bishops in his favor. This decision, as the matter became more understood, produced counter-decisions of other councils and churches against him and his friend. People, in short, of the greatest eminence and stations were deceived and undeceived, with regard to these two persons; and the whole Christian world, especially the western part of it, was thrown into parties and confusions. Their doctrines were at length most solemnly condemned by several succeeding Bishops of Rome, particularly by a famous decretal of Celestine the first, and by several councils.* Let me only add here, for the sake of some of my readers, that the Church of Rome was not then, as afterwards, an impugner, but a maintainer, with the other churches of that age, of those principles, which are properly enough called the doctrines of grace.

Austin, Jerom, Fulgentius, Marius Mercator, and other great men in the church, animadverted upon the growing heresy with all their abilities, confuted its tenets, and exposed their pernicious tendency. It was (as *Jerom* called it) the *pestilence* of the church, which soon spread itself through every country of Christendom, and rankles

* CAVE *Hist. Liter.* The second council of *Orange* in particular published 25 canons upon grace and freewill against Pelagianism. Some of them are so striking and excellent, that, were there room, I could find a pleasure in translating them; as they show the sentiments of the church in the year 529. *Sum. Conc. per* B. Carranzam, *Fol.* 166. Paris, 1558.

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in many different sects, to the present day. The Arian and other heresies, which afflicted the church at the same time, swell the volumes of ecclesiastical history, and must fill every pious mind with concern, that such multitudes of persons, many of whom were eminent for all that is valuable among men, should be either induced or obliged to treat religion like philosophers their questions in the schools, as a subject only to be debated on. It was a true expression of Sir *Henry Wotton*, though a coarse one, *Pruritus disputandi, scabies ecclesiæ*, "the itch of disputing is the scab of the church."

The SEMI-PELAGIANS (or as they were soon after called *Massilienses*, from the people of *Marseilles* in France, to whom *Cassian* the monk carried this doctrine, about A. D. 430.) were formed principally under *Julian* Bishop of *Eclana*. His opinions were not radically different from those of his confederates *Pelagius* and *Celestius*. Both himself and his many disciples agreed in the main, that grace was only an extraordinary gift or advantage of *nature*, by which, as by a superior understanding, the mind might work and merit consideration and reward even from God himself. They, as well as succeeding heretics upon the same subject, when sifted to the bottom, were discovered to confound grace and nature, and to refer to one what is the sole operation of the other.

Concurring in too many things with these heresiarchs, though possessing some advantages greatly above them, after many ages arose the famous ARMINIUS; a man of great erudition, of great understanding, and confessedly

sedly of great apparent piety.* The doctrines only, which he disseminated, drew into question among his contemporaries the truth and reality of his Christian profession. He is said to have been perverted by some *Socinians* of *Poland* and *Saxony*, who had brought into *Holland*, *Arminius's* country, their heterodox principles and writings, which last were publicly burnt by order in 1598. But the seeds escaped, and grew up into evil trees with evil fruit.——I need not attempt this history, if I had room: it is in almost every hand. Let it suffice to add, that the opinions of *Arminius* and his adherents were solemnly condemned by the council or synod of *Dort*, in which was collected perhaps an assemblage of men, who, for their learning, for their piety, for all natural and gracious attainments and advantages, are not to be ranked after any general council which ever appeared in the world.

Arminius began this defection from the principles of the reformed religion; yet it is but justice to say, upon a careful perusal of his works, that he was not nearly so rank in heresy, nor followed *Pelagius* and *Socinus* half

* With equal truth and pleasure, I can say, in the language of the learned Dr. *John Edwards*, that "I desire to entertain favorable thoughts of those I contest with, and to remember that holy men do sometimes build hay and stubble on the foundation. I charitably believe, that there are many good men of the *Arminian* persuasion; though it is their unhappiness to be led away with the error of the age." Pref. to *Ver. Redux.* But I believe too, that their experience is superior to their principles; for, when they are with God, they ask like all God's children, in the sense of their own depravity and wants; but, when among men, they talk with almost the same confidence of their own powers, as the irreligious people of the world.

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so close, as many have done who followed him. *Episcopius*, (a man of the first parts, who chiefly wrote the *Acta Synodalia* in opposition to the synod of *Dort*) *Curcellæus*, and, after these, *Limborch*, *Le Clerc*, and many others, widened the breach from the original doctrines of the reformation, and at last degenerated into a sect, which (to use *Mr. Bayle's* expression) is become "the common sink of all the Socinians in Europe." It must be allowed, that, as is natural in all errors, there are great gradations among the *Arminians*; some verging towards *Pelagianism*, with the celebrated *Dr. Whitby*,* in several points; and some drawing nearer to the truth, and deserving to be distinguished from the others. These last have therefore been named, in order to prevent the appearance of abuse and confusion.

SEMI-ARMINIANS. It would seem invidious, and besides it is unnecessary, to mention *names*; because every body knows, and scarce any body attempts to disguise it, that a very great part of our clergy in the establishment, and very many of those out of it, have adopted principles, not at all agreeing with those of the reformation, or with the articles enjoined by public authority. Of those who have departed from the pure Calvinistic doctrine (or, to say better, from the pure and primitive truth) some are so far detached, as to ren-

* Abp. *Tillotson* goes farther than simple Pelagianism; for he says, that men have not only power to recover themselves, and (spiritually) to be "carvers of their own fortune;" but "have it also very much in their power to be the *sovereign restorers* of piety and virtue to a degenerate age;" nay, further, that "they could certainly prevail, either to make men good or to restrain them from being so bad." Vol. ii. Serm. 5. p. 147, &c.

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der the difference obvious to every eye; and others approximate so nearly, as to render it difficult precisely to draw the line. Yet a line there is; and every christian should endeavour to discover it; because they, that are not *in* the truth, may well doubt whether they are *of* it, and because it is not a matter of indifference in the essentials of religion (whatever men of loose or latitudinarian principles may think or say under the specious pretext of moderation) how men *enjoy* the truth or *know* it. It was the advice of the wise, "Buy the truth, and sell it not:" it must not be lost, or parted with, or pared away, for ungracious accommodations, at any rate. Every particle is precious, because it originates from God. In questions of real indifference indeed, or in matters merely circumstantial, it is right to "think and let think;" but, in momentous and radical points, which affect the honour of God, the vitals of Christianity, the edification or salvation of souls; indifference or unconcern is a vice and a crime, founded in *Laodicean* lukewarmness at best, but often in a deplorable absence of the power of godliness.

With the above sects another should be noticed, which in every age of the church has been more or less rife, and is but too abundant in the present day: I mean that of the ANTINOMIANS. The first Protestant or reformed divine, who was entitled to this name, was *John Islebius Agricola*, a man of learning and eminence, an intimate friend of *Luther*, and a great assistant in the reformation. He himself was soon reclaimed by *Luther*, and, under the full conviction of his error, published a retractation. Happy for many would it have been, who have since imbibed his opinions, if they had followed him in this instance

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instance of his candor. There have been many gradations of these down to the most atrocious and libertine *ranters;* but all have been accused, and many of them at least with too sufficient reason, of *turning the grace of God into licentiousness,* and of perverting Christian liberty to looseness of life, or to the vile unbridled liberty of the flesh.

Without meaning to offend any one whom truth may not offend, I have thought it might not be unwelcome to some readers at least, if I should attempt to draw into parallel the general opinions, as nearly as possible, in very few words, of the above mentioned sects, or sorts of persons, upon the TWO leading points I first proposed, namely, the FALL and DEPRAVITY of nature, and the GRACE of God. As I would not wilfully misrepresent any thing, I will endeavor to state their respective principles as clearly and faithfully as I can, leaving it to the candid and intelligent reader to correct me, if I am in the least instance mistaken, and only reminding him of the difficulty of drawing the opinions even of persons of the same denomination into propositions, that may comprize or satisfy them all. With respect to the doctrine, which God's word and Spirit teaches his people, I have less difficulty: *they* will confirm it, as others cannot, by their own experience. Such a synopsis, or close and comparative view of the matter, may help to point out the strait line of truth from the deviations of error. I mean this for *edification,* not for *disputation;* for the exhibition of sound doctrine, not for the promotion of discord; for the glory of God, and for the help of Christian men.

I. A Sum-

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I. A Summary of Opinions upon the FALL and DEPRAVITY of NATURE.

1. *Antinomians.*	2. *Pelagians.*	3. *Semi-Pelagians.*	4. *Arminians.*	5. *Semi-Arminians.*
These are various in their opinions; but they generally own the fall of man and consequent depravity of human nature, which disables him from working out such a righteousness, as may justify him before God. They affirm, however, for the most part, that it is in every man's own will and power to exercise faith (by which they mean only the natural assent of the mind) without any inherent alteration, or renovation, or adhibition of new and spiritual life, or any divine help supernaturally communicated to him.	That there is no original sin; that children are born in the perfection of the first parent at his creation; that both he and they would have died, had there been no sin; and that man hath now a *vis naturæ*, or natural power, both to avoid sin and to fulfil the commands of God.	That though man fell, yet he lost not all his powers, but that he still hath a natural will and strength towards good, a capacity of asking, by the use of which capacity he may render himself fit for grace *ex congruo*, or *meet* to receive it; and that then by the use of this grace he may obtain salvation *ex condigno* or of merit and desert: in a word, that the potency of faith is in a man's self, being only the exertion of a natural faculty; and that God's election doth not arise from his own eternal counsel and will, but from the foresight only of the right use of free will in the creatures.	That there was no covenant of works with the first man; that man indeed fell, and depraved himself and posterity by sin, so as to make redemption needful; but that there still remains a part of the divine image, a natural power of obeying God's commands to believe and do spiritual things, an innate capacity to receive the gospel and offers of salvation on the one hand, or to resist and reject them altogether on the other.	That man by the fall became so depraved, stunned, or loaded, in the faculties of his soul, as not only to lose the right use of its moral powers, but, through sin, to contract in them enmity and opposition towards God; that notwithstanding there yet remains a natural capacity or ability inherent in the soul, that, upon the removal of the load or stupefaction of sin, and the introduction of light and strength by grace, it obtains a restored use of its moral powers, so as rationally to embrace the truth of the gospel, to give faith or credit to the promises, to trust in them because of their moral evidence and certainty, and to proceed to final salvation, through the same grace and means continuing for that purpose to the end.

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6. *Orthodox.*

That Adam was created under a covenant of works, by obedience to which he would have been happy, but by disobedience became miserable, and also ruined and corrupted all his faculties, by bringing present spiritual death (or separation from the life of God) upon his soul, subjecting to natural death his body, and exposing both to death everlasting; that being, not metaphorically only, but truly and spiritually dead to God, he hath no ability whatever spiritually and savingly to *see, know, love* or *receive* the things of God, *before* he is quickened by a new birth; that, being *totally* averse and of *contrary materials* to goodness through corruption, he must be *changed, renewed, or regenerated* in the spirit of his mind, receiving in such change the adhibition of spiritual and divine faculties, called *the unction from the Holy One* or *the divine nature*, before he can be *one with God*, or be built up as a part of his temple; that this *entire* corruption and aversation of Adam from God was naturally transmitted to all his posterity, who, in him, both sinned and fell, and who, with him, are *naturally, morally*, and *spiritually*, capable of nothing but sin, being only the "children of wrath," and "deserving only God's wrath and damnation;" that the leopard might sooner change his spots, a clean thing be brought out of an unclean, or any contrary be produced from another, than they, who thus "of their own nature are inclined to nothing but evil," can exert a good will, power, or affection towards God, or by any principle in themselves, or from any other creature, reach the *true* knowledge and enjoyment of heavenly things.

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II. A Summary of Opinions upon Grace.

1. *Antinomians.*

That grace means only the free favor of God, in providing Christ to pay man's debt of sin and to obey the law in his stead; that, on these truths being reported to the ear, he has sufficient power, if his will be so inclined, left in his nature to yield faith, or assent, to them, and thereby rightfully obtains pardon of sin, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness; that this benefit, so received, delivers him absolutely from the law of God, not only as a covenant of works, but also as a rule of life; that there is therefore to be no more conscience of sin under the most enormous transgressions, these being all swallowed up in Christ, and the soul brought into a liberty from legal bondage; that thus sin can do a believer no harm, because it is all pardoned, nor acts of goodness any service, because he is justified without them; that, consequently, the inward operation of the Spirit is as well unnecessary, as derogatory to the freedom and completeness of Christ's obedience; and that all the scriptures, which mention this, are either to be referred to the power and life of the written word, or are to be understood figuratively, as the change of a man's state only in point of acceptance, and not virtually or inherently as a new life bestowed with new powers, or what is usually signified by imparted grace, sanctified experience, the internal witness of the Holy Spirit, and the like.

2. *Pelagians.*

That nature, being in its pristine condition, all the use of grace must be to co-operate with it, in order to render the work due from nature more easy; that grace is universal, or God would be partial and unjust to grant it to one and deny it to another; and that this grace works only in the improvement of man's natural faculties.

3. *Semi-Pelagians.*

That the grace of God is necessary, as without it man cannot do good works; but that he must come to God first, believing in him of his own will and strength, without any grace for that purpose, because grace is the reward of previous faith, not faith the fruit of grace; that grace, when given, is imparted to the rational and natural faculties, in order to enable them to work out and merit salvation; and that electing grace is an impious doctrine, tending to establish the stoical notion of Fate or Necessity.

4. *Arminians.*

That grace *sufficient* is given to all men, but that its *efficiency* depends upon themselves; that it comes by way of rational illumination, or moral suasion of the mind, and not by communication of the particular and special gift of faith, with new and spiritual faculties, by the Spirit of God; and that grace, not being the omnipotent, but only the physical, or co-operating, action of God upon man, a man may, by the natural power of the will, receive grace, or, by the same power, resist, frustrate, and reject it, so as eventually to make it no grace at all.

5. *Semi-Arminians.*

Those of them, who come nearest to truth, say, That the doctrines of grace are to be admitted, and that the whole of the salvation of the elect depends upon God; that, according to his own election, God bestows both sufficient, efficient, and even invincible light to the understanding by his Spirit, proposing rational motives and enforcing their impressions upon the mind, either by or without the word, and determining the natural will by these, but without imparting new and divine faculties; that the supposed agency of the Holy Spirit in changing the heart, in regenerating the mind, in new creating to spiritual life, (excepting in *hyperbole* or *figure*) and in maintaining that life by a *real* union with Christ, both against and above the corrupt life of nature, is enthusiastic and fanatical; and, in a word, that the natural or rational faculties of the soul, by the Spirit's removal of moral impediments, and by his own moral influence, suasion and impression, are restored to that ability, which acts faith, performs obedience, pleases God, and, through Christ, obtains glory.

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6. *Orthodox.*

That grace is both free mercy in itself, and *the sole efficient* communication from God to his chosen in Christ; that the will and powers of man before conversion rather resist than promote it; that, therefore, in the FIRST act of grace in conversion, man being spiritually *dead* to God is wholly impotent and passive under the sole activity of the Divine Spirit, who takes away not only the strength of *resisting*, but the *will* to resist; that this gracious Agent imparts a *new* and *divine nature*, with its own proper and peculiar faculties, or, in other words, by the action of his grace, constitutes a *new creation* with a new life, a new birth to a new and spiritual world, and an holy resurrection of the soul from the death of sin in this evil world; that, in consequence of this, the person hath an heart of *flesh* for an heart of *stone*, so called because naturally incapable by sin of all gracious impressions; that the Holy Spirit bestows not only *light*, but *sight*, to the understanding, and then not merely appeals by moral evidence of *reason*, but infuses a supernatural act and conviction of *faith*, which, though not against sound reason, is of far greater force, and in this way applies what is emphatically called *the demonstration of the Spirit and of power*; that the Holy Spirit alone, operating upon the soul, as the soul doth upon the body, UNITES it to Christ for all things, and THEN, but not till then, by a sweet and divine compulsion, draws and enables the person, thus become a true believer, in the degree appointed, both to *will* and to *do* of *his* good pleasure, for all life and holiness; that, in this way, and by

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by the instrumentality of the word, the believer is *taught of God* in all the truth of salvation, having also the very "thoughts of his heart cleansed by the *inspiration* of the Holy Spirit;" that being truly *inspired*, by having *Christ dwelling in his heart*, and by *having the Spirit of Christ, without which he* could be *none of his*, he is and must be, *though but a wayfaring man*, infallibly taught, both because the teacher is TRUTH itself, and because *it is not possible for the elect to be* finally or essentially *deceived;* that thus the Christian is not a doubting *reasoner*, grounding himself upon the fallacious deductions of a depraved understanding, but a gracious and firm *believer*, kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, of which he receives the earnest by the work of the Spirit within him, and of which he gives the proof by works of righteousness from him.

The last confession is not a mere human scheme or system, but is founded upon the divine oracles. It is also most certainly agreeable to the *public* confessions * of the reformed churches, to the sentiments of the most pious and learned divines both English and foreign who follow those confessions, and is indeed pure and unsophisticated Calvinism, or rather (what it ought to be called) true and vital Christianity; as might be

* See the valuable *Syntagma Confessionum Fidei*, published at *Geneva*, 1619. See also the testimony of Bradford and other reformers in *Fox's* Acts, p. 1470. WITS. *Diss. Epist. ad* Huber. &c. ad loc. Abp. *Leighton, Rivet, Owen, Du Moulin, &c.*

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proved by a multitude of testimonies, if it were necessary.

From the premises it follows; that, if it be said, men can act for God by their own natural powers without his grace, it is *Pelagianism*:—Or, that grace only is needful to assist those natural powers in order to work, *after* men have believed, and asked, and sought for it; this is *Semi-Pelagianism*:—Or, that all men have common or *sufficient* grace to aid the natural powers in order to acquire more grace, or can resist grace in its intentions and operations; this is *Arminianism*:—Or, that the natural powers are only illuminated and strengthened by the grace of God, though invincibly so, in order to faith and holiness, without any infusion of a new and divine nature, with its own new and peculiar faculties; this is *Semi-Arminianism*:*—Or, finally, that the natural or any other faculties of men, either *in* or *towards* the act of conversion or regeneration, or new birth by the divine Spirit, have in the first instance *no ability at all*, but are *purely passive* in the hands of God, *as the clay in the hands of the potter*, the Spirit blowing where it listeth, and men hearing only the sound thereof, but incapable of bringing it in, or driving it away; and that, *in consequence*, of this birth, a new and divine life is infused with its own new and gracious faculties, which life *then* operates upon all the natural faculties, so that even *these* are enabled to yield an obedience, which before they were both incapable of and contrary

* This opinion was censured by the Synod at *Rotterdam* in April, 1686.

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to; this is the true and unsophisticated doctrine of the Bible, of late years called *Calvinism*.

It is nothing to the present purpose to say, that our natural powers are to be brought under the means of grace, and are to be exercised as much as possible in all ordinances; for this is both agreed to and insisted upon by all true Calvinists: but the *elenchus*, or clinch, of the whole matter is their *potency* in the affair of conversion, upon which all true Calvinists are agreed, that they have, *in se*, *no potency at all*, but that the whole workmanship is of God, as much as the original creation of the world was; and that therefore it is called καινη κτισις, a NEW *creation*.

Nor is it to the purpose to urge, that this principle is abused by hypocrites and false professors; for there is not one doctrine of the gospel, which has not been abused, and perhaps more grossly abused than this either has been or can be. The greatest mercies are the most capable of the vilest abuses, but NOT BY THE CHILDREN OF GOD. The devil and his agents first ruined the world of nature; and all their malice and subtlety are ever upon the watch to mar and disturb, though they cannot destroy, the world of grace. But the foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal; *The Lord knoweth them that are his;* and, *Let every one, that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity*.

This is the way, in which the children of God will always desire to manifest their regeneration. An heavenly birth must have heavenly actions and an heavenly mind.

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mind. It is that likeness to God, which the believer both hath and loves. The experimental Christian, therefore, cannot talk of his own natural powers, which are infirm and discordant, but of the goodness of God and the power of God manifested in him and to him. All other men are *of the earth earthy;* and the tendency of their hearts and lives, when duly examined, is earthy also. *Whatsoever* is born of the flesh IS FLESH, and cannot possibly rise above its own principle or cause. The works of the flesh will therefore necessarily be produced either from the carnal hand or carnal mind; and these can produce no other. *A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit; for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes.* The *spiritual birth* constitutes the essential difference between those, who are made by it the children of God, and those, who are only "naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam." And the effect and fruits of this birth *prove* the difference to the believer's own conscience in the sight of God, and generally in the sight of the world.

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CIRCUMCISED.

THIS appellation, in the letter, belonged to God's people under the law, as persons entered into his covenant, and bearing the sign of it in their flesh; but, in the spiritual and final intention, the title is equally applicable to the redeemed under the Christian dispensation. For, however their times and œconomies may vary, their right or grace of salvation is one and the same.

The sacrament of circumcision was first appointed to *Abraham* by *Jehovah* himself, when he made known unto him his covenant, and showed that he was the *Alehim*, the persons in covenant, both to him and his seed after him; that is, to all those who are partakers and followers of the same faith with him, and to whom, for that reason, he is spiritually *the Father*, or forerunner.*

The sign imported, the cutting away *the filth of the flesh*, the *old man* of sin, the *superfluity of naughtiness*, and that the persons, on whom it truly was made, were separated, in spirit, from the world, the flesh, and the devil, and were now become strangers and pilgrims upon earth, seeking a better country and a heavenly. It also

* Rom. iv. 11, &c,

signified,

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signified, that, as they had, by this act and the faith of it, renounced their former state and condition of nature, they were become partakers of another calling, and devoted to another service, even God's; and that, as God in mercy had delivered them from their former wretchedness, and brought them into the promise and prospect of an everlasting inheritance, according to an everlasting covenant established between the persons in *Jehovah*, who therefore called themselves the *Elohim*, the *covenanters, witnesses, &c.* they, as believers in that covenant and promise, admitted the sign of it upon them, by which they might be known as such both to other believers, who had undergone the same rite, and to the world, who despised it. In token of this, they received a *name* for life and distinction, (and among the Jews a significant name) if before they had none, as children had not; or, if they had one before, as *Abraham* had, then a *new name*, which testified their new life and calling by the covenant of God. Thus *Abraham* was *chosen*, and *brought forth* from the idolatrous world, and entered into the covenant of God: and, in the same way or spirit, all believers are induced to follow him as their Father, and are *named* or *known of God*, as he was.

This sacramental sign was a painful testimony (as I have elsewhere observed) of faith, and especially to adults; and therefore was a considerable testimony of the sincerity of those, who submitted to it, or who brought their children under the operation.† The thing

* Neh. ix. 1. Rsv. ii. 7. iii. 12.

† To this purpose is the remark of that great physician and

signified

signified is abundantly more so. The circumcision of the Spirit, in cutting off a man from himself, or in putting off the old man, the renunciation of the flesh with its lusts, the conquest of the world, the resistance of the devil, with all the adverse and hostile circumstances connected with these, are not slight and easy affairs; but forcibly try the heart, soul, and spirit, of every person, who is engaged in conflict with them. The *concision* (as the apostle calls the mere outward sign,) the cutting round of the flesh only, might be accomplished, and hath been done in innumerable instances, where the grace denoted did not follow: but the *piercing two-edged sword of God's word dividing asunder the soul*, or carnal affections, *and the spirit*, or mind renewed, which is the true circumcision, or (as the apostle names it) the *circumcision made without hands** of man; this is a very superior matter, and can only be accomplished by him, who made the

learned Rabbi, MARMONIDES: *Circumcisio superfluum appetitum diminuit: quod autem virtutem intensivam membri illius voluptatemque debilitat, id extra omnem dubitationem est. Nam cum membrum illud statim in ipsa nativitate sanguinem suum effundit, tegumentumque amittit, sine omni dubio exinde debilitatur. Hinc dixerunt sapientes nostri; mulierem cum viro incircumciso matrimonio junctam difficulter ab ipso posse abstrahi.—Circumcisi habent unum quoddam signum, quod illos conjungat, et ne quis alius, qui non est ex illis, dicere possit, se ex illis esse. Nam solet quandoque homo id, vel propter suum commodum, vel in aliorum contumeliam et detrimentum, facere: sed hæc actio, circumcisionis nempe, ita comparata est, ut nemo vel sibi, vel liberis suis, nisi propter fidem et religionem, eam sit facturus. Nam non est levis aliqua cruris læsio, vel brachii adustio, sed res durissima et difficillima.* More Nev. p. iii, c. 49.

* Col. ii, 11,

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everlasting covenant, and who makes this spiritual token of it to take place in those, whom in his mercy he hath brought into it. But this *must* be performed in every person, or the sign of the covenant is not upon him; and, consequently, he can draw no spiritual comfort from any outward condition or circumstances in life. *We are* THE CIRCUMCISION (says the apostle to some believers, who were, according to the outward rite, uncircumcised) *who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and* HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH.* Those only, who have the sign in the *abstract*, or within them, are under the covenant, and interested in all its blessings.

As none but the circumcised among the Jews were admitted to the passover; so none but those, who are spiritually circumcised by the word or law of God, can be partakers, or can truly desire to be partakers, of what the passover signified, even Christ and his salvation. To be uncircumcised, was to be out of the covenant, or *an alien to the commonwealth of Israel:* to undergo circumcision was so necessary a mean of admission to the covenant, that it was sometimes called the covenant itself. Thus *he, that hath suffered* (spiritually, and according to the intent of the sign), *in the flesh, hath ceased from sin:*† sin is not imputed to him, for Christ's sake: it doth not reign in him, through the power of his Spirit: he hath done with it as to its cause, and shall soon cease from it as to its being, for ever. He is one with Christ in the covenant of grace; and so

* Phil. iii. 3. † 1 Pet. iv. 1.

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one, as to be considered for a part or member of Christ himself, an unalienable heir and child of God, ordained, by the oath of the covenant, to an unalienable inheritance.

What a death's wound is here to *the body of the sins of the flesh*,* to all Antinomianism of heart and life, to all Arminianism of carnal holiness, inherent power, and self-righteousness! The flesh and fleshly mind, we see, are to be entirely circumcised by the Holy Spirit, as dead and filthy before God; and a new man is to take the rising power in the soul, *created according to the image*, and *walking after the pattern*, of HIM *that created him.*

This was signified by the injunction of circumcision on the *eighth* day, which was a *renewal* or *beginning* of time; the subject of circumcision having remained in a state of nature and corruption one whole period of time, or week. Then it rose, as it were, from the *dead*, from the *desolate places** of the curse brought in by sin, and was *anointed with fresh oil* as a member of the church in the covenant of God.

It was not enough to live *among* the people of God; but *personal* circumcision was so indispensable, that

* Isa. lix. 10. The word שמנים, *sepulchres*, or *desolate places*, because sepulchres anciently were made in them, the places of the *dead*, stands in opposition to שמן a person *strong* and *lively*, or *lusty*, as our translation renders it concerning the men of valour, in Judg. iii. 29. It is the same root, from which the word *light* is derived. The primary idea is *unction* with *oil*. All that lives and thrives is replenished with *oil*. All that is consecrated, or lives, to God, is anointed with oil, i. e. the Holy Spirit. The *name* of the day, שמנה, in this view, implies the idea both of *consecration* and *new life* to the circumcised person before God.

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every one, who remained uncircumcised, residing in the house or land of the Jews, and consequently appearing to belong to them, *that soul was to be cut off from his people*, as one guilty of schism to them, and of breach or rejection of the great covenant before God. The spiritual intention of this is equally obvious and important.

This sacramental sign was also a *seal*, or *testimony*, both of God's right in his people, and of their inheritance in him. It was a seal of the righteousness of faith to *Abraham*: and the spiritual circumcision is also the seal of the Spirit in those, who are truly *Abraham's* seed—— a seal, which cannot be lost, but abideth to the day of redemption. By this, God knows or owns them to be his; and by this they know themselves, and may be known by others, to belong to God.

But persons might be and were circumcised in the flesh, who knew no more of the great instruction signified thereby, than the idolatrous nations who copied the ceremony from the antient believers, or the present Mahometans who use it. Hence we read of people, who indeed were circumcised in the flesh, but remained uncircumcised in *heart*, in *lips*, and in *ears*. To such, their circumcision became uncircumcision in the sight of God, a mere outward ceremony, a vain mark of distinction, without effect. Being merely natural men, notwithstanding all outward privileges, they could not receive, or hear, or understand, *the things of the Spirit of* God, but esteemed them for nothing, or *foolishness*. *To whom* (says *Jeremiah*) *shall I speak and give warning? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach:*

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*they have no delight in it.** *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them which are circumcised for* (their) *uncircumcision* [בערלה] *Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon and Moab* [names given in reproach to the carnal Israelites] *and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness* [the carnal professors among the Gentiles] *for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart.*†

Others rested in the rite, and in the external circumstances annexed to it. These they mistook for righteousness, and upon these grounded their hope of acceptance with God. And we know, by the example of some gracious souls in the early days of the Christian dispensation, how hard a thing it is to flesh and blood to be divested of the prepossessions of education, and to look, with a single eye, to the intention only of those outward forms, which from our infancy have been inculcated upon us. What a marvellous circumstance did the calling of the Gentiles seem to *Peter* and his Jewish friends, in the history of *Cornelius?* A vision was imparted to take off the edge of the apostle's prejudices; and the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost, with much amazement, could only have removed those of his fellow-disciples. And yet this very thing was the frequent subject of all the prophecies, and was constantly sung by the Jews in the cxviith psalm, which made a part of their daily worship in the temple.—But to him, that

* Jer. vi. 10, compared with 1 Cor. ii. 14. and Acts vii, 51.
† Jer. ix. 25, 26.

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is circumcised in the flesh, for the purpose of glorying in the flesh, or in its powers and righteousness, we have authority to say, though the institution was expressly from God, it shall be only a *beggarly element*, which can profit him nothing. The reason is given; whosoever is circumcised for this purpose, that is, of pleasing God by a righteousness and strength of his own, effectually sets aside Christ, and *makes himself a debtor to do the whole law*. If he can perfectly perform it; well: he shall be justified by that perfect performance, and shall have its reward. But if he *offend in one point*; (and who hath not offended in ten thousand?) *he is guilty of all*: he is a transgressor, who can never possibly justify himself in future, if ever he could cease from sin, by a law which he hath broken already. The conclusion is; that fallen man must either be justified by Christ, and so live by him, as the apostle declares he himself lived;* or else not be justified at all, and therefore perish everlastingly.

The circumcision of the flesh was soon performed; but that of the soul is not only sharp, but progressive and long. The Holy Spirit is the great agent; and he employs a variety of instruments. The first and chief one is the word of God; and the law particularly is the keen sharpness of that word, which (as we have noticed) is compared to a two edged sword, all edge and point. But there are secondary and subordinate means, which are frequently and almost daily employed for the separation of the Christian soul, from the world, the flesh, and

* Gal. ii. 20.

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the devil. Afflictions, sanctified afflictions, are among other circumstances, used for this great design. They cut off the heart from inferior things, and disentangle it from a variety of lower engagements to a quicker and more entire devotedness to God. We are naturally so light in our minds, that we need frequent weights of trouble to keep us down. Losses, crosses, disappointments, perplexities, sickness, and the keen apprehensions of approaching death, are all of them made to be parts of the circumcising knife, which, in the power of the Divine Spirit, severs the Christian from his own self, and renders him more abstracted from every thing but God. To the men of the world, they have no such consequences, but inflict only despair, remorse, or dismay. Thus good and evil come from the hand of the Lord: evil for nothing but evil, to the children of disobedience; but evil for good, and therefore all things for good, to them that love him.

This cutting name (if it may be so called) of true believers should induce *great searchings of heart* in all professors. "Do I pretend to belong to Christ; and am I circumcised and cut off from the old man, the life of my evil nature, by his word and Spirit? Have I renounced indeed the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh? Do I look upon my own strength, concerning salvation, as inherent weakness, my own wisdom as erring folly, and have I been led to abhor all the pretended righteousness of myself and other men as *filthy rags?* Do I lean upon Christ to save me by his mercy through faith? Am I therefore praying for faith, and the increase

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increase of faith, by him? Is his word my only rule? and do I seek his Spirit as my great helper and guide? Am I, in the grace of that Spirit, and in entire dependence upon *him*, seeking for holiness and truth, walking in submission and resignation to his will, and striving above all things to set forth his glory? Is the honor of the Lord and his cause dear to my heart? And can I bear any sort of reproaches, rather than that his blessed gospel should be reproached through me? Do I live in the hope of this *heavenly calling*? Does the warm expectation of its issue and end ever gladden my soul? Am I delighted in communion with God by prayer and praise, and in the faithful fellowship of his people? Is it my most fervent desire, that the *kingdom* should be the Lord's with full sovereignty over myself and all the creatures; that the *power* should be his, and manifested and owned to be his, in the spiritual as well as natural world; and that the *glory* should be all his own, without mixture or abatement, for ever and ever?"—Christian; are these the true and sincere desires of thy soul, above, without, against, all human approbation and gain? And canst thou appeal to the Searcher of hearts, that this is the prevailing bent of thy spirit?——If so; this work must be acknowledged to be *the finger of God*, the sealing of his spiritual circumcision, the mark set upon thee as his own portion for life eternal. Rejoice in the Lord, my Christian friend: and let all that know and love thy faith and hope rejoice likewise in thy behalf. Thou hast the good portion; and it shall be well with thee for ever!

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BAPTIZED.

As circumcision was the initiating ordinance into the church under the legal, so is baptism under the present dispensation. The one rite sensibly exhibited the *putting off the old man with his deeds;* the other represents the *putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.* The former sacrament preaches the necessity of alteration in life and principle; the latter shows wherein it consists. They both cry down the attempt of making the old man good, according to the philosophy of reason; and jointly oppose all that false holiness of corrupted nature, which not only militates against the true, but against truth itself revealed from heaven. There is no real holiness or religion in the world, but that which is imparted from the skies. EVERY GOOD GIFT, AND EVERY PERFECT GIFT, *is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.**

As *Abraham* and all believers, with their children, under the law, were circumcised in the name of the *Alehim,* † and thus were formally brought into *the bond of the covenant;* so believers, with their children, under the gospel, are privileged to be baptized into the same

* James i. 17. † Gen. xvii. 7, 8.

name,

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name, only more expressly drawn out into that of *Father, Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, and are thereby made inheritors of the same promises with the fathers. There is but one *Lord*, to whom they are dedicated; one *faith*, in which they believe and serve him; one *circumcision*, or one *baptism*, by which they profess to belong to him. The general assembly of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, make but one church, who have all been baptized into Christ and have put on Christ; where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female; but where they are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Of this the *Israelites* were reminded in that prophetic precept which enjoined, that as the members of the Jewish church were, so should the believing strangers, or proselyted Gentiles, who became members of that church, be, before the Lord.† And believers under the gospel should recollect, that they are not a new house, temple, or olive-tree, distinct and separate from that of the patriarchs and the Hebrews, but parts of the same one great house and temple, branches grafted into one antient olive tree, fellow-heirs, united brethren, and joint members, with all that have gone before them, in every spiritual privilege and mercy. We have no new religion; but the inseparable same, only under different forms adapted to different times, with the faithful Jews, and with their predecessors the patriarchs, up to *Abel* and *Adam*.

Indeed, they had their *doctrine of baptisms* as well as

* Gal. iii. 28. † Numb. xv. 15, 16.

we,

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we, and much to the same signification:* our distinct advantage in the flesh is, that, now all things being fulfilled which related to Christ, the types and shadows of the law concerning those things are abated in force of practice, because no longer necessary when the things themselves have been manifested; and therefore two plain easy sacraments, for memorials, are instituted instead of a whole code of ceremonies, which were expressly imposed only *till the time of reformation*,† i. e. till Christ should come, and alter the Jewish dispensation.

The first of these sacraments (baptism) intimates a "death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness; for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby [i. e. by his death and our new birth] made the children of grace." We are in the unbelieving world at large, till by the outward rite we are brought into the professing church: and we are afterwards unbelievers in the world, till, by the thing signified in the rite, we are made "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven."

When the soul is truly turned by the Lord unto himself, and is made deeply sensible of sin by the convictions of the law; the first manifestation of mercy to it is to bring it to Christ the propitiation and atonement; and the next, to seal it with the grace of the Holy Spirit, really if not in full display, to the conscience, that it may know, love, and enjoy the blessings of redemption.

* The learned reader may see a great deal upon this subject in SELD. *de Synedr. Hebr.* l. i. c. 3. p. 15—23.

† Heb. ix. 10.

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To this purpose is that remarkable passage—*Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.** The apostle alludes to the figure in the ceremonial law, which prescribed *the sprinkling of the blood* of the sacrifice upon the worshipper, and to the washing at the laver which stood near the altar; and, under the symbol of this well known ceremony, he invites the believing Hebrews to approach unto God, as sinners, by the *blood of Jesus* the mediator, applied through faith, and by the *washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* Thus also they washed their garments under the idea of purification for the body, or the clothing of the body;† and they washed the body itself for the soul, under the spiritual intention of its being the garment of the soul.‡ They were to be clean throughout, not merely in putting away the filth of the flesh, or the literal impurity which may cleave to it, but in being *cleansed from all* inward *filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God:* or (as the apostle expresses it elsewhere concerning the *Corinthians*) *ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by,* or *in, the Spirit of our God.* To this effect likewise is the allusion of *clean garments, undefiled garments, walking in white raiment,* the being *without spot or wrinkle,* and the like phrases; all which denote the purity, which is main-

* Heb. x. 22. † Exod. xix. 10. 14. Gen. xxxv. 2.
‡ Lev. xiv. 8. xv. 13. Exod. xxx. 20. 2 Kings v. 14. Ps. li. 7. Isa. iv. 4.

tained

tained in Christians, in part now but perfectly hereafter, by the cleansing renovation of the Spirit of God. The like sense do our Lord's words convey, when he affirms, that *except a man be born of water, and* (then explaining what the water means) *of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* The type is to be used; but the spirit of the type must accompany it, or the type fails of its intention. If we trust only in the form, we have nothing but the form; but if, through the form, we reach after the substance; then the form hath attained its end, in our good and in the glory of him that ordained it. But, alas, upon the slightest view, what a falling off is here in the religious world? "There are multitudes (said one of the most excellent of men) that are running headlong in the course tending to destruction, through the midst of all the means of salvation; even the saddest way of all to it,—through word, and sacraments, and all heavenly ordinances, walking hell-wards. Christians, and yet no Christians; baptized, and yet unbaptized.—But we have no other word nor other sacraments to recommend, than those that have been used so long to no purpose: only we would call men, from the dead forms, to seek the living power of them, that they perish not."[a]

Of old, the apostle says of the Jews, *all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea;* but all believed not; and therefore they were overthrown in the wilderness. They all used the form and were equal partakers of the outward sign; but those only,

[a] LEIGHTON'S Com. on 1 Pet. iii. 21.

who

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who had faith, received the spiritual benefit and blessing; for *by faith the just shall* LIVE.

Through this spiritual baptism, we are declared to be the children of God; as Christ was at his baptism; and we by him. "I suppose (says the learned *Mede*) that, in that baptism of his, the mystery of all our baptisms was visibly acted; and that God says to every one truly baptized, as he said to him (in a proportionable sense;) *Thou art my Son, in whom I am well pleased.**"

Those, who have been baptized indeed into *Christ, do put on Christ.*† They are cloathed with him. As *Adam* and *Eve*, the first of the church as well as of the world, were cloathed by God with the skins,‡ probably of victims, slain by his appointment for sacrifice; and as the tabernacle afterwards, which was the figure of the church in Christ, was *covered with rams' skins dyed red*,§ also sacrificed, it is likely, at the altar: so all believers have a *covering of Christ and his Spirit* upon them, the robe of his righteousness, the garments of his salvation *parted among them*, after they have beheld him as the atoning sacrifice for their sins. And thus (says the prophet, in that chapter, which is full of allusion to the ceremonial law and its intentions) *upon all the glory shall be a defence*, or rather, *the glory shall be a covering over all:* and thus *there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat* (of temptation and trial,) *and for a place of refuge* (from wrath,) *and for a covert from storm and from rain*, or when violence and perse-

* Disc. xvii.
† Gal. iii. 27.
‡ Gen. iii. 21.
§ Exod. xxvi, 14.

cution

cution of the ungodly come against them.* This *glory* was Christ, under the well-known emblem of a *cloud*,† which shadowed the tabernacle, and afterwards filled the temple.

Baptism sometimes, though rarely, is used to denote *sufferings*, but still under the idea of *purification*. Thus the baptism of *fire*, with the Holy Ghost, is mentioned; because of its searching and purifying, as well as afflictive, nature; and because Christ *will thoroughly purge his floor*, or church, by sorrows and trials. And thus also Christ speaks of this baptism for himself; because, through sufferings, he would become a perfect Saviour; bearing, and bearing away, all the sins of his people laid upon him. This affliction was so great, that he says of it; *I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!* If Omnipotence found the curse due to sin so heavy and dreadful; O how should poor, feeble, sinners tremble, at the very thought of their sins being found, unpardoned, upon themselves in death and judgement!

Briefly; the whole matter, with respect to each of ourselves, comes to this. "Am I baptized, not with

* Isa. iv. 5, 6.

† 1 Kings viii. 10. From עב a cloud, as a type of Christ, comes אב a name for the Messiah among the Jews. Thus the bow of the covenant is, spiritually, in Christ. Gen. ix. 13. The glory of Jehovah appeared in the *cloud*. Exod. xvi. 10. xix. 9. *et al. mult.* The *cloud* of glory overshadowed the mercy-seat. Lev. xvi. 2. The *cloud* talked with Moses. Exod. xxxiii. 9, and conducted Israel, Numb. ix. 15, &c. The *cloud* overshadowed the disciples. Matt. xvii. 5. Christ will come in a *cloud* with power and great glory. Luke xxi. 27. Rev. i. 7. xiv. 14.

water,

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water only (for, with this, cups, and tables, and such like things, are baptized;*) but also with, what the water signifies, the gracious Spirit of the living God? Do I rest in the form, in the thing done, in the party or profession where it was done; or am I looking, through all this, to the daily renewing of my mind? Am I baptized indeed, not into a sect or denomination of Christians, but into Christ himself? And can I prove that I am thus baptized, by having put on Christ; by wearing him as my covering, by looking to him as my life, and by walking after him as my guide? Hath a real change passed upon me? Have I truly a *new name*, that is, a new nature, a new condition of life, in which all things are become new to me? Is the old *Adam* more and more dying and subdued; and is Christ, the new *Adam*, more powerful and triumphant within my soul? Are my evil tempers and dispositions in subjection; hath *the spirit of judgement and the spirit of burning*† passed in any measure upon me; and does the life of Christ appear, in its holy vigor, through all the circumstances of this mortal body? Do I use my Redeemer, both as the covering or atonement for my sin, and also as the head of divine influence to induce righteousness and true holiness in my heart and conduct? Do I love his holy ways; and

* Mark vii. 4,

† Of this baptism of the divine Spirit the prophet speaks, in Isa. iv. *And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one, that is written for life in Jerusalem. When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from within her, by the spirit of judgement*, or decree, *and by the spirit of burning*,

in

are all his commandments precious to me? Is it the loathing and abhorrence of my heart to offend my compassionate Master, or to walk in any paths but his own? Are my desires indeed towards him, and the remembrance of his holiness, daily? And am I waiting, in faith and patience, for my full redemption, when I shall see my dear Lord face to face, eye to eye, heart to heart, and enjoy him and his for ever and ever?"—Verily, O Christian, if this be in thee and abound, thou hast the tokens of the kingdom of God upon thee. Go on, and prosper. He, that hath begun the good work, will carry it on and compleat it to the day of Christ; when the sublimest thoughts of thy mind, and the widest wishes of thy heart shall all be fulfilled, and more than fulfilled, without end.

JUSTIFIED.

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JUSTIFIED.

THIS word evidently means *made righteous*. The persons *made righteous* must, previous to their justification, have been *unrighteous*; and accordingly God is said to *justify the ungodly*.* To justify one already righteous, would be the same absurdity, as to make whiteness white, or gold to be golden. Through faith in Christ, the poor and perishing sinner, stript of all other claims and pretensions, is justified or made righteous; yea, so righteous, as, in the sight of him who cannot look upon iniquity, to be considered *without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing*; nay more, to be *presented, in the body of* Christ, *holy, and unblameable, and unreproveable in his sight*. Thus much for the *perfection* of the righteousness, by which they are justified.

But whence have weak and dying mortals *such* a righteousness as this? Do they find it *in themselves*? Do *they* work it out? Can *they* produce or procure it, *for themselves*? Common experience shows, that there is not a man upon earth, that there never was a saint born of woman, that it is not indeed in the present nature of man, to have or to exhibit any righteousness of this kind. As man now is, a perfect inherent righte-

* Rom. iv. 5.

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ousness is "a non-entity of impossibility." The world, accustomed as it ever hath been since the *fall* to imperfections, would call a pretender of this sort, as it hath called the mere notion of such an one already,—"a faultless monster:"—a being on earth, totally different from all others. The word of God, which is yet better authority, represents man, both in his body and his soul,* as

* By the FALL, all the faculties of the *soul* and all the properties of the *body*, are become corrupt and depraved: so that there is *no whole part* left in either, according to the present constitution of nature. It is not an unapt illustration of this matter, which is given us from an antient Rabbi. "The body and soul may endeavour to exculpate each other in judgement: but how?—The body might say; It was the soul that sinned: for, presently, when she is departed from me, I am thrown into a grave like an insensible stone:—But the soul might answer; It was indeed the body which sinned: for, as soon as I am released from that unhappy conjunction, I fly through the air like a bird." Upon this statement, the Rabbi decides by a parable. "A certain king appointed two watchmen to defend the fruits of his fertile and beautiful garden, the one of whom was *lame* and the other *blind*. They were equally tempted to eat of their delicious charge. The lame man, therefore, suggested to the blind, that, if he would take him upon his shoulders, he would gather a sufficient quantity, which should be shared between them. The blind man consented; and the fruit was carried off. After some time the king paid a visit to his garden, and demanded what was become of the fruit. The blind man said; it was impossible for him to steal it, for he had no eyes to find it out. And the lame man urged, that the loss could not be laid upon him; for he had not power to stir a foot. But, when their lord found out the truth of the matter, he commanded the one to be taken up on the shoulders of the other, and, in that state, that both should be punished together. In like manner (says *R. Juda Hakkadosh*) will God clothe the soul again with the body in the last day, and for mutual sins condemn them both together." *Gemara Sanhed.* apud *Wits.* in symb. p. 483.

equally

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equally weak and wicked by nature; and declares even the believer, after grace received too, to be still clogged with *infirmities*; to be *deceived* if he presume at any time *to say, that he hath no sin*; to have a *law of sin warring in his members*, and a *body of sin* under which he must struggle and groan, till in death he is and shall be delivered from it.

The matter of fact then demonstrates, that the righteousness of the *justified* is not and cannot be *inherent*; not wrought out by themselves; not derived from any creature. The word of God also is very clear and explicit upon this momentous subject, and shows, on the one hand, that it is *not by works of righteousness, which the justified have done*, or can do, *that they are saved*, though they certainly are enabled to do what are really much, beyond all other men; but that *in* JEHOVAH *all the seed of Israel*, the whole church of God, *are justified, and shall glory*; or, as it is expressed in another place, *their righteousness is of me, saith* JEHOVAH.

It would be endless to quote the texts, which assert this doctrine. The whole Bible is full of it; and its whole system stands upon it. The ceremonial law, with all its rites, would be absurd without it. The prophets, speaking by the Holy Ghost, continually maintain it, as the first of mercies, and the greatest of privileges. And our Lord and his apostles cannot be understood, but upon the supposition of this truth, which is one of the prime sinews of the gospel, and one most important part of its grand design. Take away this perfect justification by the perfect *Jehovah*; and every man must

live and die A SINNER, and consequently under the ban of the perfect law, and a subject of eternal destruction.

No righteousness but a perfect righteousness can justify at all, and much less before a holy God. Indeed, nothing short of perfection can equal the perfect requirements of the holy law, and, consequently, cannot deserve the name of righteousness. Evil may appear to be good among men; but, however subtle, or covered, or mixed, cannot escape the detection and abhorrence of God. The gospel, therefore, by which I mean the whole word of truth from Genesis to the Revelation, proposes no other righteousness for justification, than a complete one; and for this purpose constantly exhibits a divine person, able to procure righteousness and therefore able to save; capable of bestowing righteousness, and therefore not a creature who needs all his own, and who cannot have to spare; and infinite to make righteousness endure, and therefore *to bring in an everlasting righteousness.*

But how can *one* receive the righteousness of *another?* —Exactly in the way, whereby one received the sin of another; and this was undoubtedly by *imputation.* Christ was *without sin;* and yet he *bare sin:* Christ was separate from sinners; and yet he died, and was *made sin,* and for sin *a curse,* in behalf of sinners. He is not said to be made a *sinner* (for that he was not, nor could be, in himself) but *sin* in the abstract, that is, bearing imputatively all the sins and sinfulness of his people, and in this respect having *no whole place in his body,* none but what was under this imputation, and consequently under execration. Their sins were *reckoned* to him;

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him; or he could not rightly or to any purpose have suffered, *the just for the unjust*. He certainly could not have had so strong a censure as to be *accursed*, but *because* of transgressions; and therefore, as he had and could have *none of his own*, the transgressions of *others* must have been *imputed** to him and *taken* upon him. In like manner, sinners cannot be justified, or stand righteous, in the court of conscience or of heaven, by their own doings; for, be they as moral as they can be (supposing for a moment, that, as sinners, they could have any real morality at all), they could not offer a righteousness without flaw, much less a righteousness *delightful to God*,† and certainly not an infinite and *everlasting righteousness*, which only can afford a proper title to everlasting life and glory. As their condemning sin was transferred by imputation to another, who was able to *bear* it and to *make an end of it*; so their justifying righteousness must be their's by a like imputation from ONE, able to produce and to present it in their behalf. Accordingly we are told, and told by the Holy Ghost in the strongest language, as well as by numerous institutions most forcibly representing the fact; that, *as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so, by the obedience of* ONE, *shall many be made righteous*.‡ One whole chapter is employed to declare, that this

* Even *Abp. Tillotson* allows this, and says expressly, that "Christ bore our sins by way of *imputation*, and suffered for them in our stead, as the sacrifice was supposed to do for the sinner. This is evident beyond all denial." *Serm. before the Queen, on Heb.* ix. 26. p. 25.

† Isa. xlii. 21. ‡ Rom. v. 19.

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righteousness, justifying the soul before God, is entirely by imputation; and that the grace of faith is chiefly occupied, in embracing this righteousness for that imputation.*

In this important sense also do I understand the remarkable prophecy of *Joel*, quoted by the apostle *Peter* in his first sermon on the day of Pentecost. The Spirit was to be poured out *upon all flesh*, i. e. God's people both of the Jews and Gentiles, in the *last days* or dispensation, as a testimony and seal, that Christ had *finished the work* of salvation: and thus God would *show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath;* which were; BLOOD, the blood of Christ expiating sin; FIRE, the wrath of the Father taking vengeance upon him, when bearing sin; and VAPOUR, or PILLARS, of SMOKE, the sweet-smelling savor (alluding to the Levitical sacrifices) of the Redeemer's merits and atonement, ascending up *victoriously* in *palm-like columns*, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus God is well-pleased with his people for Christ's sake; and his people are completely justified by Christ, and so *have access through him by one Spirit to the Father.*

In this new condition or state, they are privileged to come *boldly*, *freely*, and *with open face*,† before God in

* See Rom. iv. † This may serve to explain the injunction of covering and uncovering in 1 Cor. xi.—Man is by nature faulty, and therefore ought to be covered: Christ is faultless, and so may justly stand *aperto vultu*. But, as man represents Christ in his church, who is all perfection, he is for that reason to be uncovered: and as the woman stands for the church or human nature, which hath no perfection of its own, and therefore nothing to boast of, she ought to be covered or hidden.

prayer

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prayer and in duty; and they are received graciously by him, as *recti in curia*, upright and clear at his tribunal, and *justified* entirely *from all the things*, which his law and justice could require of them, and for which his law and justice have received ample satisfaction from the hands of their *surety*.

While this righteousness justifies the sinner, it proves the *divinity* of the SAVIOUR, who is therefore styled, in behalf of his people, with equal love and consistency, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. But, as this hath been copiously insisted upon in another place,* it is the less needful to dwell upon it here; and especially as, upon the *data* of the Bible, it will not easily be refuted.

Our English church, and all the other Protestant churches, have insisted upon this great truth, in their holy services, in their confessions of faith, and in their public homilies or declarations.† It is the grand basis of the reformation. It is more; it is (as *Luther* said) *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ*, that very article, on which the church of God itself will either stand or fall; or, if I may use the words of a learned Bishop now

* *Horæ Solit.* Vol. i. p. 50. &c. 2d. edit.

† *Syntagma Confess. Fidei. English Homilies. Hooker's Eccl. Pol.* B. v. *Beveridge's Serm.* Vol. v. *p.* 99. *cum multis aliis.*

Among others, it may not be unwelcome to the reader, if a remarkable opinion on this subject be offered, even from an antient Romish Cardinal. This was the famous *Cantarini*, a noble Venetian, one of the most pious and learned men of that church, and esteemed such by the Protestants themselves, as *Sleidan* relates in his *Com. lib.* xiv. Whatever errors he might hold as a Papist, he was certainly a Protestant in the docrine of justification, and, for this his suspected inclination towards the reformation, was said to have been poisoned by some emissaries of *Rome* in the year 1542.

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now living, "it is the very corner-stone of the whole system of redemption."*

Very different indeed was his principle upon this head from the *double justification*, which his brother Cardinal *Bellarmine* since invented, and which the Papists, and some called Protestants too, have adopted after him; as may appear from the following quotation. *Quoniam ad* DUPLICEM JUSTITIAM *pervenimus per fidem, justitiam inhærentem nobis, et charitatem, ac gratiam, qua efficimur consortes divinæ naturæ; et justitiam Christi, nobis donatam et imputatam, quoniam inserti sumus Christo et induimus Christum, restat inquirere utrùnam debeamus niti, et existimare, nos justificari coram Deo, i. e. sanctos et justos haberi? Ergo prorsus existimo, pie et Christiane dici quod debeamus niti, niti inquam, tanquam re stabili, quæ certo nos sustentat,* JUSTITIA CHRISTI NOBIS DONATA, *non autem sanctitate et gratia nobis inhærente. Hæc etenim nostra justitia est inchoata et imperfecta, quæ tueri nos non potest, quin in multis offendamus, quin assidue peccemus. Idcirco in conspectu Dei non possumus ob hanc justitiam nostram haberi justi et boni, quemadmodum deceret filios Dei esse bonos et sanctos. Sed justitia Christi nobis donata est vera et perfecta justitia, quæ omnino placet oculis Dei, in quâ nihil est quod Deum offendat, quod Deo non summopere placeat.* HAC *ergo* SOLA, *certa, et stabili nobis nitendum est, et ob eam solam credere, nos justificari coram Deo, id est, justos haberi et dici justos.* De Justif. apud AMESII Bell. enerv. Tom. iv. l. vi. Thus a Papist himself could dare to write before the existence of the council of *Trent*, which increased and established the errors of the *Romish* church, as fatally as *Laud*, and his associates and followers, have poisoned our English church with the dregs of Arminianism, and with some other opinions, not very dissimilar to those of *Rome*, as stated by the council of *Trent*.

* See Bishop HORSLEY's charge to the Diocese of *St. David's*, p. 7. In this excellent piece, which demands, as well for its author as for its own weight, the most attentive and general perusal, are admirably stated, the true distinction between religion and mere morality, and the necessity of insisting upon the doctrine of justification, in order to root out some common errors, and to promote real Christianity and godliness of life.

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The holy garments, prescribed for the priests under the law, eminently figured that *robe of righteousness*, which believers assume by faith from the Lord their righteousness. As the legal priests could not minister before God without them; so the faithful, who are the true priests, cannot appear or act acceptably, but as clothed and justified by their Redeemer. He is emphatically and universally *their righteousness* in this view; and so they are said to be *found in him*, to *put him on*, to live *in him*, &c. In this view also it is, that the outward sign of the prophecy is spiritually accomplished; *they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.* The sinners who crucified him, i. e. those sinners, for whom he died, and but for whom he had never been crucified at all, *parted his garments among them*, and obtained each his share in him who is the covering of his people; and they obtained by lot, or according to God's disposal (as *Canaan* itself was *allotted*) that interest in the indivisible *vesture*, by which they are *clothed upon*, as comprizing in itself life immortal. They were to be *many sons brought* into *one* possession. Hence their Saviour was to be stripped and made naked as a slave and a *sinner*, to be broken and divided as a *man*, in order to clothe them with himself and his righteousness, and thus to unite them through himself, (as his own human nature was united) unto God. They receive him *distributively*, as the bread broken and the blood sprinkled or distributed for righteousness and atonement; and they enjoy him *collectively*, as one respecting his divinity with God, and one respecting his humanity with them to bring them to God, according to special purpose and

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and appointment; unknown at first to man, as the falling of a lot is, but from the beginning well known to him, who solely disposes all things, *according to the counsel of his own will.* Hence the triumph of the church: *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for* HE *hath clothed me with the garments of salvation,* or of the Saviour, HE *hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom* יכהן *decketh,* or clothes himself as a priest, *with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.**

As garments clothe the body; so the body itself is said to clothe the soul.† Alluding to this, righteousness is called a garment; because without it, in God's sight, a man is esteemed *naked;* that is, unseemly and unclean. And this garment of righteousness is sometimes represented under the image of *white linen,* as an emblem of spotless purity, which will be kept undefiled in heaven, and which ought to be preserved in all possible cleanness here below. The same idea is conveyed by covering the ark, and many of the utensils of the tabernacle and temple, with *gold,* as a substance the most precious and pure of all others. *The clothing* of the church is, in this symbolical sense, of *wrought gold,*‡ bright and beautiful; or, according to the thing signified, *all-glorious within.* The *wedding garment,* and the *arraying* of the *Lamb's wife in fine linen, clean and white,* exhibit

* Isa. lxi. 10.

† 2 Cor. v. 4. *et al.* So Christ's *garments* are said to be *rolled in blood;* i. e. his body was wounded to death, and became unclean for the sins of his people.

‡ Ps. xlv. 13.

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the same image of the righteousness of Christ, which is *granted* to his church and people, and which, because it is given to them and put upon them, is made their own virtually, and therefore denominated *the righteousness of saints.** This is *the matter* of their justification before Jehovah; not their own doings, either before or after the reception of grace; not their holiest frames, or desires; not, in whole or in part, their ownselves. Christ, the victim or sacrifice for his people, clothes with his own garment of righteousness all that belong to him.†

This garment, like that of the priest's under the law, can only be worn by those in Christ the true tabernacle which God hath pitched and not man, and must not be profaned by persons not anointed as spiritual priests, or used to purposes not sanctified by his Holy Spirit. The word of God treats with abhorrence the very mention of *the garment spotted by the flesh*; that is, whatever proceeds from the carnal mind, which is filthy and unclean in the

* Rev. xix. 8.

† This is intimated by Gen. iii. 21. Exod. xxv. 11. 21. xxvi. 4 and many other places.

Possibly, according to the emblematic and allegorical style of the Old Testament, whose histories, though of private persons, are not of *private interpretation*, the circumstances of the birth of *Esau* and *Jacob* are to be understood as descriptive prophecies of their different characters. The one was born *red*, אדמוני, of the earth earthy, and covered as with an *hairy garment*, a clothing derived from fallen animal nature; and so he became, like *Nimrod, a man of the field, a man of the earth*, a mere rebel or worldling: the other was born without such a covering (as all God's children are now born without trust in themselves) and became איש תם *a perfect man*, (See Ps. xxxvii. 37,) *a dweller in tents*, a real pilgrim upon earth, and a worshipper of the Lord.

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sight of God. Its principle and end must be evil, because it originates in sin and is directed to self, in opposition to the grace which always seeks the divine glory.

This doctrine of free and full justification by faith through the righteousness of the God-man Christ Jesus, is a most precious and consolatory truth to a weary and heavy-laden soul, who only can know the worth of it. In those trying hours, when the conscience accuses, and the law condemns, and God's righteous justice seems to cry aloud for vengeance, upon account of a sinful heart and sinful life; then to hear of a perfect and free forgiveness, a release from thraldom, a deliverance from bondage, and the best robe of righteousness both to cover defects and to afford a welcome title to the marriage of the Lamb and all its happiness; this is good news, indeed, this is the gospel itself, these are those very *glad tidings of great joy*, which the spirit of the self-convicted sinner pants for, and which lift up his admiring soul with a burst of praise, for so surprising a mercy. None but those, to whom God has granted repentance unto life, can understand what all this means; but those conceive it well, and find great delight in looking back upon, what is called in scripture, *the day of their espousals.*

It is this salutary truth, which chears the heart of the believer in the whole course of his pilgrimage, and which is (as it were) the sheet-anchor of all his hopes. It is not human faithfulness, or strength, or any thing else, either real or supposed, in man, which establishes a *certain hope*; it is the grace, bestowing justification through faith, that makes *the promise sure to all the seed*, and exempts them, as members

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hers of Christ, living and walking by his Spirit, from future condemnation. The blood and righteousness, which satisfy God and all his attributes, may well satisfy them. When therefore trials and afflictions visit the Christian, and visit him (as they are always employed to do) in love, and for the increase of faith and holiness; he can say; "True, these things are grievous and distressing to flesh and blood, and they wear my outward man down to the ground, for which purpose they are permitted to come; but, notwithstanding, my foundation is sure, my Redeemer is faithful, his strength and righteousness are everlasting to support and justify me, he hath mercifully given me these, he employs nothing and takes away nothing but for my good, his Spirit teaches and refreshes my soul under all my weariness and pain, and soon the end shall come, when all shall be well with me, and I shall enjoy my Lord, my life and portion, beyond the storms of evil and of time, for ever and ever. Then every mystery and every mysterious path shall be made plain and clear, and be proved to have been the straitest and the best for my journey to heaven. Then the face of the tapestry (as one expresses it) shall be turned, and all its figures appear beautiful and proportionate, the back-ground of which seems so strange and confused to my present view. Then the building, now scattered in its members, shall be found to have been *fitly framed* indeed by an unerring mind and an almighty hand, when brought part to its part and set up in its long-concerted order and arrangement.——O my Lord, when I consider these things, I am ashamed of myself, that I should ever be so mad and so foolish, as to murmur and repine at thy providential dispensations,

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tions, which, being meant by thee for my good, must of necessity accomplish it at the last. Let me hold fast thy firm word of truth, and thine everlasting righteousness; the one assuring me of thy faithfulness, and the other of my indefectible portion; and then let me exult with the most lively faith and joy, in language taught by thine own Spirit; *I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate* ME *from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus* MY *Lord!*"

This is the voice, this the privilege, of a Christian.—Pray, dear reader, that it may be thine. Thou mayest repent of the joys and sorrows of the world, which only work death; but of these joys and these sorrows, issuing from the love and providential care of an heavenly Father and kind Redeemer, there can be no thought of repentance; because this love shall exist, beyond the very approach of change, world without end.

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SAINTS.

THIS is one of the most glorious titles of the children of God, and so peculiarly their own, that the rest of mankind readily despise and renounce the name. The persons, who seek a right to it and declare their hope of its participation, are, decidedly and at once, the object of Jehovah's love, and of this world's abhorrence and contempt. But as there is scarcely a name so frequently applied to them in the holy scriptures, as this, respecting their state both in earth or heaven; they must be content with all the contumely, that can be thrown upon one of the holiest of denominations, and *go forth without the* camp of the world, *bearing the reproach of* him, who bestowed it upon them, with all the blessedness connected with it.

The *Hebrew* name, applied to persons, describes them as devoted, destined, prepared, sanctified, or set apart, in a state of distinction or abstraction from the multitude of mankind, by the will and power of God, to his own service and glory. Agreeable to this radical idea of the word, are all the doctrines and providences of the bible inculcated, applied, and performed. The *doctrines*, as they appear either in representations or prophecies under the Old Testament, and in more express terms under the New; and the *providences*, as they arose and

and were fulfilled from age to age; are all in harmony with this great truth implied under this great name, that God hath chosen to himself a peculiar people out of the nations of the earth, that they are set apart to himself from the profanations of a wicked world, that they are prepared accordingly by his holy Spirit for an heavenly life, and that they shall most certainly, notwithstanding all opposition and enmity from earth and hell, attain to the everlasting possession of the kingdom of glory.

To exhibit this gracious privilege, there are many applications of this term *sanctified* or *holy* both to persons and things. *Abel* was accepted, and not *Cain*; *Jacob*, and not *Esau*; *Joseph* and *David* rather than their brethren; and, omitting many other *personal* examples, the whole nation of the Jews, by way of prophetic or doctrinal similitude, and the national rejection for a time of all others. Again; particular stations, services, portions, privileges, sacrifices, were appointed by God to the priests under the law, all of which were *set apart* or *sanctified* to them distinctly from all other men. In like manner, certain vessels, made of the same materials with other vessels, were devoted to the sanctuary, and so became *vessels of honor* for the great *Master's use*; and, in one word, the sanctuary itself, the eminent type of Christ and his people, was prepared, dedicated, made holy to the Lord, and not to be profaned by the very foot of a stranger, or one out of the covenant. It is but the same idea in the New Testament, where the apostle speaks of presenting the church as a *chaste virgin to Christ*, her betrothed husband; having *wedding-garments*, which were always prepared and bestowed *distinctly* and *individually* upon

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upon the several guests; of washing those garments of salvation, and making them *white*, or pure, in the blood of the Lamb; with many other things of the like signification scattered through the holy word. The full signification of all these various figures and symbols, is comprehended in that one declaration of Christ; *for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the* TRUTH.* The *crown of the anointing oil of the* ALEHIM *was upon him*, the true *Nazarene*, † separated from sin and undefiled by sinners, that he might be able to make a perfect atonement; and, by making it for his people, to separate them also from evil and its effects, and to sanctify them by his Holy Spirit, who is the truth and the author of it.

From these premises it manifestly appears, that all this sanctification, or separation, of the redeemed arises from the will and purpose of God; and, as his will and purpose are, like Himself, from everlasting to everlasting; it follows, that sanctification is neither more nor less than the eternal election and design of God brought into act in the appointed season, called *the fulness* or measure *of time*, which act must therefore be surely and entirely accomplished, above all molestation or hindrance.

Agreeably to this, it is written of these *saints* and *strangers* in the world, that they are *elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*; ‡ that they are *chosen out of the world*, by

* John xvii. 19. Gen. xlix. 26.

† Compare Lev. xxi. 12. viii. 9. 12.

‡ 1 Pet. i. 2.

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Christ and *exhaused* or made to stand; that they are THEREFORE *hated by the world*, and are no longer *of the world*; that they are the objects of Christ's love and prayer in absolute distinction from the world, who said *I pray for* THEM; *I pray not for the world*; and that, finally, they are gathered, *without the failure of one*, to everlasting life.

The Greek name for *saint* is less full than the Hebrew, and chiefly implies a general separation or abstraction of soul from the world. It may be and has been properly rendered, *not earthly*, or, *out of the earth*. The title, though negative, is of great signification; as may be easily seen from what it is opposed to. Thus *Abel* offered in *faith*, looking to Christ for redemption and heaven: but *Cain* brought of the *fruit of the ground*, as a *tiller* (or rather *servant*, עבד) *of the ground*, a mere man of the world, and expected most probably a wonderful gratification in all earthly things from his formal and carnal homage to his Maker. *Esau*, the carnal *worker* (as his name signifies) was also a *man of the field*, a mere worldling who sought his support and delight from the earth, and valued a mess of pottage more than his spiritual privilege, and from hence had his name *Edom*, one, like the soil, and of the soil from whence he was taken, born hairy like the *goats*, whom he resembled in that name and nature, expecting all his support from his own skill and labour, and from the influences and productions of the material world. *Jacob* on the contrary, was תם איש, not a *plain*, but a *perfect man*, one made so in Christ, (as in Ps. xxxvii. 37.) *dwelling in tents*; i. e. either a pilgrim or stranger upon earth (as Heb. xi. 9.) or a worshiper of God

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God in the tabernacles, or places of worship, then used by the faithful. These *men of the earth*, or *world*, as the scriptures frequently style them, are all *Nimrods* or *Edomites*, mighty hunters and rebels against the faces or persons of Jehovah, or violent persecutors and enemies of his people. He that is *born after the flesh*, and is *of the flesh*, ever did and ever will, to the end of time, *persecute him that is born after the Spirit*.* Hence, when the nation of the Jews, though primarily selected as to outward condition and privilege typifying the inward, became generally carnal and worldly; they are reproved by

* Gal. iv. 29. This forcibly implies the necessity of regeneration. We cannot know the things of God, or approach in real worship to God, by our carnal nature, which is weak because it is wicked, and spiritually dead because contrary to and incapable of the actions of spiritual life. Hence the reason of the figure or ceremony, delivered to *Moses* in Exod. iii. 5. *put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.* This acknowledgement of a man's own baseness or unworthiness, this *pulling off the shoes, this keeping or observing of the foot*, (as it is called in Eccles. v. 1.) is, in the mental sense, *the putting off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts*, and the being humbled in the consideration of it, whenever we would present ourselves before the Lord, who cannot look upon iniquity without abhorrence. Hence, in the parable of the prodigal son, who was *naked, hungry, and unshod*; vile as vileness, and wretched as wretchedness itself; representing therein the undone state of man by nature; we may perceive, that a wonderful change was made in his condition by the gratuitous acceptance of his father. 1. He was endowed with *the best robe*, the robe of righteousness. 2. He had a *ring put on his hand*; the seal and pledge of the Holy Spirit, and of his being taken into the covenant. 3. He had a *covering for his feet*; intimating, the removal of his vileness, and the new obedience of his life and conduct. Luke xv. 22.

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a variety of heathen, polluted, or significant names, descriptive of their true state in the sight of God. Thus they are called *rulers of Sodom* and *people of Gomorah*;* *Babylon* because of confusion; *Moab*, because of their pride; *Dimon*, because of their bloody guilt in persecuting God's witnesses; *Damascus*, because they should be left *childless*, i. e. lose their birth-right as the Lord's *rejected*;† *Ephraim*, in the same place and many others,‡ from their desire of only carnal plenty and fertility; an *empty* and *waste land*,§ or vineyard;‖ *Ariel*, once the *lion of God*, but then plunged in sorrow and weakness because of sin;¶ *Edom*, because of their earthly mind, which coveted the things of the world rather than the things of God.**

From all this we may perceive, that no name, family, or nation; no outward church, or profession of religion; can either make or keep a man a saint; but that it is a *spiritual* and *essential distinction*, freely conferred by God on whom he chooses, and powerfully accomplished by him

* Isa. i. 10. † Compare Isa. xvii. 1, 2. with Gen. xv. 2. Amos iii. 12. and Rom. ix. 6, 7, 8.

‡ Isa. xxviii. 1. 14. Ps. lxxxviii. 9. Jer. xxxi. 9.

§ Isa. xxiv. 1, &c. ‖ Isa. v. 5.

¶ Isa. xxix. 1. &c. ** Isa. lxiii. 1. See also the prophecies of *Ezekiel*, *Amos* and *Obadiah*, where, covertly, and primarily, under the heathen names, the punishment and dereliction of the Jews are awefully foretold. This changing of names, in prophecy both of good and evil, is very frequent in the scriptures: thus *Abram*, and *Sarah*, and *Jacob*, received names of promise; and *Esau*, and *Pashur* (Jer. xx.) and the *Israelites* at large (Hos. i. 6. Psalm xxii. 12, Amos iv. 1.) titles of denunciation or abasement.

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in the objects of his choice, whom therefore he sanctifies to himself through Christ, and redeems from the earth, that they may be partakers of his glory. The distinction is as essential as that between *sheep* and *goats*; of whom, the one are holy because redeemed by him who bare their sins for them, and the other unholy, because (according to the representation in the law) they are *sin-bearers*, that is *bearers of their own sins*, in the sight of God, in their own proper persons, and therefore perishing from his presence.

These sanctified or separated ones prove their calling by its effects. They do not appeal to the hidden volume of God's decrees, but to the open book of their faithful lives. They boast not of good works, but do them; and, in doing them, own from whom they derived the power, not only of the act, but of the very thought and occasion which preceded it. They are not servants of the earth, though for a while they live upon it; but servants of God, on whose love and bounty, which never fail them, they depend for all things. Nor do they feed, like men of the world, upon *dust*, the serpent's food and curse, nor upon the *husks* or vile trash of sin and evil which those husks denote; but upon *the food of the* GREAT ONES, the bread of covenanted grace and peace, the flesh and blood, the righteousness and propitiation, of their great Redeemer. It is their subsistence, their very life, love and desire, to be holy and devoted to him in their persons, and to be abundantly fruitful in every good word and work, through him, in their conversations. This was signified under the law by the prohibition of eating what is therein called *uncircumcised fruit*, or feeding on certain devoted things

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in any other place than what the LORD *should choose* to appear in. The spiritual support of the children of God is all *covenanted* mercy, enjoyed by them under the *true circumcision of the Spirit*, and in the presence, or faith in the presence, of *the Lord that bought them*. And to them are realized those charming prophecies; JEHOVAH *hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength; surely, I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies, and the sons of a stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured: but they, that have gathered it, shall eat it, and praise* JEHOVAH; *and they, that have brought it together, shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.—He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks; bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.* THINE EYES SHALL SEE THE KING IN HIS BEAUTY.*

If this be true; and true it is, if any fact was ever true; we may say with the incomparable *Leighton*, that "we need not then that poor shift for the pressing of holiness and obedience upon men, to represent it to them as the meriting cause of salvation. This is not at all to the purpose, seeing, without it, the necessity of holiness to salvation is pressing enough; for holiness is no less necessary to salvation, than if it were the meriting cause of it; it is as inseparably tied to it in the purpose of God."

Let no man then despise the name of *saint*, but rather pray for grace to become one. And let him, who is such in reality, study to prove his right to the glorious title

* Isa. lxii. 8, 9. xxxiii. 16, 17. with Lev. xix. 23—25. Deut. xii. 17, 18.

more

more and more, as he values the consolation of his own mind, and the honor of his heavenly Master. In a little time the Lord shall come, in the greatness of his power, *to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe.* Then shall *thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him.* And then *shall the saints of the most high,* whose lives were counted folly and their end without honor by a mad and evil world, *take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.* So be it, Lord Jesus; come quickly: Amen.

Happy Christian! God's own child,
Called, chosen, reconcil'd;
Once a rebel, full of taint,
Now a duteous, humble, saint.

Happy Christian! Look on high;
See thy portion in the sky!
Fix'd by everlasting love,
Who that portion can remove?

Happy Christian! Though the earth
Cannot know thy gracious worth;
Yet thy God shall soon proclaim
Through all heav'n thy blessed name.

Happy Christian! Angels say,
"Hither, brother, come away:
"Leave the world and all its woes;
"Take with us thy sweet repose!

"Happy Christian! Upwards fly!
"Rise; the kingdom now is nigh:
"Fill thy place before the Throne,—
"Place, which God hath made thine own!"

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ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS.

ZEAL for God, and for all that belongs to his truth and glory, well becomes a Christian. Without this wise and holy zeal, whatever be his opinions, however great his knowledge or his fame, he will scarcely deserve the title. True zeal springs from grace in the heart and affections; and, without the engagement of these, the employment of all our other faculties is but of little worth in the sight of God.

By *good works* may be fairly understood the whole compass of goodness, as it can be exercised by a Christian. No other person can really perform them at all; and the Christian only as he is enabled by *that*, which makes him a Christian, and distinguishes him from all other men. He is a part of the *new creation*, the renovated *workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained*, or *prepared, that he should walk in them**. God prepared him for the works, and the works for him, to the praise of the glory of his own grace by Christ Jesus.

When a man is made a Christian indeed, he is brought into union and fellowship with Christ. By this union he receives from him salvation and all the things which ac-

* Eph. ii. 10.

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company it. To illustrate this, our Lord sets before us a lively figure. He calls himself a vine, and his people the branches; and tells his disciples, that as *the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.* These words show the necessity of this union, before the fruit can be produced; and the necessity of fruit after the union, is shown by the words of the whole context.* The head and the members give another image of the same truth. The members can have no direction, action, or even life, but by continual union with their head; nor can the members of Christ, in a spiritual sense, WITHOUT HIM.† Christ will not cease to actuate his members: they cannot be separated from him: and, in his action upon them, and in their activity by him, consist all their comfort and holiness, undivided from his person and glory.

This is the principle of works properly *good;* for all the works, which are "otherwise done than as God hath willed and commanded them to be done," are not intrinsically good, in their agents, however they may conduce to the service of others; but are, on the contrary, dressed and disguised sins, produced by the natural man, in a selfish way for carnal ends, without the life of God, or true respect for Him.

* See John xv, 1—8. It is the just remark of an able and eminent divine; "as surely as the vine-branch can have no power independant of the root, so surely cannot the Christian *think, act,* or *live* as such, but so far only as he derives his abilities from the stock upon which he is engrafted." JONES's *Inquiry upon the Spring.* p. 36. Nothing can be said more strongly, in the way of concession, for free grace, nor more directly against free-will and self-righteousness. † John xv. 5.

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As Christ is the *pattern* of Christian holiness, so he is the *main-spring* and *motive* of all its duties within the soul. Like the sap throughout the vine; so Christ sweetly and richly diffuses his Holy Spirit through all his spiritual branches, causing them to be fruitful, in a gracious similarity to himself and to each other, and establishing their fruit so as to remain. They are not like the barren fig-tree, which was accursed in having only the fair, large, wide-spreading leaves of profession; but they bear a rich and ripe product in due season, because, from their root or stock, Christ Jesus, is *their fruit* certainly *found*.*

He hath left us an example, that we should tread in his steps; and as we delight to imitate those whom we love (for true love ever induces likeness;) so, without any harsh or dull constraint which can only show that our hearts are not engaged in the business, shall we copy our dear Redeemer in all that he hath set before us. It will be our meat and drink, our necessary, our constant, gratification and happiness, to go after his will. It will be even our will too; and contrary to our will not to go

* The allusion is to Mark xi. 13. which might have been translated thus; *and seeing a fig-tree afar off having leaves, he came, if therefore he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for where he was* (i. e. then) *was the time of figs.* This was primarily derected to the Jewish church, from whom Christ did not expect fruit *out of season*, as may be seen from another parable to the same purpose, in Mark xii 2. Luke xx. 10. And it is also applicable to every individual professor of Christianity, whose faith must be proved by its fruits and justified by its works, or else he will *be cast forth as a* barren *branch and be withered*, till at length he shall be *cast into the fire and be burned.* John xv. 6.

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after him. As the stream of a river freely flows through its course, according to the laws of providence; so the spirit of a Christian, turned aright, tends towards Christ with a willing affection, according to the order and in the way appointed for him. This is the principle of all holy obedience in a Christian. His heart and soul are in it; whereas none but a Christian's ever can be.

In this view of the case, the question, "Whether the moral law *is* not the rule of a Christian's duty," appears to be perfectly idle. The moral law *enjoins* nothing but the love of God and the love of man, and *declares* to every sinner, and to every saint, how far they come short of the pure glory of God, revealed in and to be spiritually understood by it. Of course, it is purity itself, the transcript of the holy mind of God, and necessarily therefore *holy, just, and good.* Certainly, no Christian can plead for the violation of any of the commandments; and, if not for the violation, then consequently for obedience. He must love God; and he must love man; which is the *sum* of the moral law: he dares not justify hatred to either: his grief is, that he cannot love both, more perfectly and more entirely. With the apostle, *he delights in the law of God after the inward man*, and bemoans his captivity to the law of sin, which is in his members, looking out for the time, when he shall have full and everlasting deliverance from it.

It is one thing, to consider the law as a *principle of life*, and quite another to look upon it as a *direction for duty*. In the former case, it is death and condemnation to us, all that is awful and horrible; because we are all that is vile and sinful, and therefore sentenced by it to satan

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satan and hell. We must of course utterly cast it out of our consciences and meditation, in all our approaches to God for *pardon* and *justification*. We must then consider it as nothing, or entirely done away by our Redeemer. But, in the other case, the condemnation being removed by the obedience and death of Christ to every believer, there remains nothing in the law but what is pleasant and congenial to that renewed mind, which the Holy Spirit hath wrought in him. He therefore doth not *love the law* (more than *David* or the apostle) for life, or to gain life from it; but because he is alive. The law was his enemy, when he was in the death of trespasses and sins; but, in Christ, it is his friend, pleads for his salvation through the righteousness with which Christ hath *magnified and made it honourable*,* and demands an everlasting reward for him in the court of heaven. It is no more the law of bondage to the Christian, but a considerable part of the law of liberty and love, which though he cannot absolutely come up to in his present state, he will conform himself to it as far as possible; because he is assured, that hereafter he shall be as perfect as *this* measure of perfection itself, and that it is his very happiness now to bear upon him *this* pourtrait of his holy Lord, and to walk in blessed sympathy with his pure mind.

The life of Christ, our *example*, was carried on in full conformity to the law; and indeed there can be no holiness, or knowledge of what holiness means, but according to a description or rule. And what rule can

* Isaiah xlii. 21.

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we find for this, but the revealed rule or mind of God? If therefore we live according to Christ, we cannot live in the allowed breach of any one of his commandments; for, if we thus live, and especially if we justify it, we surely do not follow our great example, but rather insult and condemn it.

As Christ is the example, so his life is our life, if we are his members. *I live* (says the apostle) *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.** It would be strange to suppose, that the life of Christ could be a life of transgression against that law, which he came to honor and fulfil; nor can any man in his senses, and least of all a Christian man, believe so mad a proposition. The *life of faith* is given and supported by the Holy Spirit, to bring us *nigh unto God* in Christ, to give us *access* by Christ in prayer and praise, to *mortify our members which are upon the earth*, to subdue the whole *body of sin*, to obtain fresh and fresh incomes of grace and experience, to know more of the love of God, to increase more in our love towards him and our neighbour, and to long more for the full fruition of our Redeemer in his kingdom. As, without faith, it is impossible to please God, or to live and act for his honor; so every one, who has true faith, must so act, and cannot allow himself to act otherwise. He has no liberty for a *cloke of maliciousness* or sin, which is only miserable bondage; but liberty for that dignified and spiritual "service, which is perfect freedom." For this end, Christ is

* Gal. ii. 20.

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his αρχηγος, his guide and accomplisher, who surely can only lead him *in the way of God's commandments, when he hath set his heart at liberty.* And, therefore, the apostle thus urges upon the *Philippians; because it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure;* κατεργαζεσθε, *be* diligently and constantly *employed upon, cultivate, go through with, your own salvation, with fear and trembling.** And what is this but the life and business of holiness?

There are also subordinate examples, whom it is our duty to regard. Indeed, our duty in Christ is but another name for our privilege; for no duty is set before us, but what it is our privilege and interest to perform. The examples of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and pastors, are to be followed, as they followed Christ; and, though they are but imperfect types or models, they are, for that reason, examples of less awe and more encouragement. Their very failings forbid us to despair, under the view of our own infirmities; while their faith and practice point out to us the road,† by which they and all the redeemed of the Lord must travel to Zion.

He that lives under the dominion of sin, and loves it; he that can cherish it, as a sweet morsel, in his heart, or in secret; is not the servant or member of Christ, but of satan. It is true; sin is in his mortal body, and may rebel; but it doth not reign. It is sin in captivity and chains; it is sin dying, and soon to be dead; it is sin

* Eph. ii. 12, 13. So 1 Tim. iv. 15.

† This road is strikingly marked out in Isa. xxxv. 8. *And an high way,* or exalting way, *and a way even the way of holiness shall it be called: the unclean shall not pass upon it; but* הוא *he* [God] *himself will be with them, walking in the way; and even the fools shall not err* therein.

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hated, and loathed, and condemned; it is sin, over which the Christian rejoices as an enemy, that shall ere long be destoyed for ever.

On the other hand, it is both sweet and lovely to follow Christ in the regeneration, or newness of life; and it is the special delight of all the children of God. This holy life, like a shining flame, burns with bright and fervent zeal for the truth of Jesus, and for all his gracious will and righteous ways. It cannot endure the least slight to be put upon his person, his doctrines, or his graces. It loves them all most dearly, and follows them all most nearly. Any distance is grievous, any doubt distressing. If there were no hell, the inward man of a Christian would make no abatement in the love of holiness or hate of sin. If there were no heaven; yet it would be something like it in his apprehension, to *walk soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*, and far better than all the joys of those, who serve the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Christian; I appeal to thy heart and experience, if it be not so. Thou art an evidence of this noble truth, and a witness for me in declaring it. I am sure, thou hast never had greater pleasure, than when thou hast been able to work most diligently, or to feel most zealously, for thy Master. His service is such a reasonable one, as not only to be right in itself, but to afford unspeakable satisfaction in the very doing it. The performance is crowned with payment all the way through. It is a service, which makes the tenor of life chearful, and encourages the soul to look upon the approach of death as only "Eternity's birth-day." From the prospect and assurance of life eternal, the heart of a Christian

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tian is borne up against all enemies and adversities, and can count them all but as *light affliction*, lasting *for a moment*, and ushering in, as well as making more welcome, *the exceeding and eternal weight of glory*.

"But, say some, may not this supposed assurance induce carelessness of mind and of life?"—Let the answer be in the words of Abp. *Leighton*, whose learning, judgement, and piety, were of no common form.—"'Tis a foolish misgrounded fear, and such as argues inexperience of the nature and workings of divine grace, to imagine that the assured hope of salvation will beget unholiness and presumptuous boldness in sin, and therefore that the doctrine of that assurance is a docrine of licentiousness. Our apostle *(Peter)* we see, is not so sharp-sighted as these men think themselves: he apprehends no such matter, but indeed supposes the contrary as unquestionable: he takes not assured hope and holiness as enemies, but joins them as nearest friends;—*hope perfectly*—and *be holy*."*

It is incumbent, then, upon all professors of religion to make full proof of their vocation by their actions among men. Let them SEE *their good works, that they may glorify God in the day of visitation.* Let genuine faith appear in its genuine fruits. Let Christians live so, as to live down every lie and slander, which an ungodly world would gladly raise upon them; and let them *commit their souls in well-doing to him that judgeth righteously*, and evince themselves to be God's *peculiar people*, whom he hath *purified unto himself*, by being constantly ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS.

* *Com. on* Peter. c. i. v. 14.

HIDDEN,

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HIDDEN, OR SECRET ONES.

THE people of God are called by this name; partly because they are *hidden* in his counsels of grace from common knowledge, and therefore unknown to the world; and partly because of that *hidden life*, which he hath planted in their souls, which, like the *new name written* upon the *white stone*,* cannot be positively or particularly understood but by him that receiveth it.

In the first view, as *known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*; so certainly the works, or workmanship, of his *new creation* were ever perfectly in his sight; and the people of his love, who are the objects of this creation, were *foreknown* by him according to *his own purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus, before the world began.*† Hence Christ is represented by the psalmist as saying to Jehovah; *Thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect,*‡ *and in thy book* [God's *order* and *appointment*] *all my members were written* [all that compose this substance] *which in continuance were fashioned* [or, as in the margin, *what days they should be fashioned*] *when as yet there was none*

* Rev. ii. 17. † 2 Tim. i. 9.

‡ גלמי, *my chaotic mass*, to human view; confused, like the parts of a building not set up, or the world itself before its complete arrangement.

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of them. How precious then are thy friends (or beloved ones) *to me! How mighty are the chief of them!**

This holy number (perfect in itself as a mathematical square, and therefore so formed or described in the Revelation,† yet utterly innumerable by the arithmetic of man) is *written*, or arranged in order as writings usually are, and composed of Gentiles *afar off*, as well as the nearer Jews. Hence, by an allusion peculiar to the sacred tongue, these Gentiles, as part of the city of God, are called *the north*, or *the sides of the north*; not only because the typical Jerusalem stood for the most part on the north side of the temple, but rather perhaps because the great flow of the Gentiles should be from the north to the church of Christ; or, because the state of these Gentiles, when the prophecies were given, was that of *darkness*, *remoteness*, or *hiddenness*, as the *north* is from the sun; and therefore the word, which signifies both this and the north, was used to describe that state, dark and distant from the Sun of righteousness. Such allusions are very frequent in scripture; and the fact, in this case, seems to justify the application of the name. Thus the church is called, in the same verse, *the joy of the whole earth*, *Mount Zion*, *the sides* [or extreme parts] *of the north*, and *the city of the great King*.‡ This was to give an idea of the whole church, Jews and Gentiles, known and unknown, in being and to be. Under the same idea, the prophet *Jeremiah* was taught

* Ps. cxxxix. 16, 17. Thus the Hebrew of ver. 17. should have been rendered; and thus nearly it is rendered by the lxx.

† Rev. xxi. 16.

‡ Ps. xlviii. 2. See also Isa. xiv. 13.

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to speak of the last dispensation, upon the coming of Christ, that God's people, whether of the house of Judah or the Jews in particular, or of the house of Israel or the redeemed at large, should *walk* together (having but one faith) and should *come together* (as to one object) and *out of the land of the north* (the land of *darkness* and *hiddeness*, ארץ צפון) to *the land given* to them and the fathers, as one common and perpetual *inheritance*.* For this reason probably, the camp of *Dan*, who prefigured the Gentiles, and who as such was to *judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel*, that is, was to have the same truth and salvation among them as the rest of the Israel of God; was appointed, in allusion to the *dark* and *remote* state of the Gentiles, or to the *secret* counsels of God concerning them, to rest on the *north-side* of the whole camp of the people, and, in their progression, was to be *the rereward of all the camps throughout their hosts*, bringing up the remnant of the church of God, after Christ should have appeared in the flesh. Hence, to the Jews, Dan was indeed, as *a serpent by the way*, secretly yet vehemently making his course, and *biting the horse-heels*, overthrowing the *agency* of the Jewish economy; *so that his rider*, the Jewish nation, *fell backward*.† The prospect of this event, which was to take place after the coming of *Shiloh*, who was to bring in *the mercy to all people*, and *to whom their gathering should be*, caused the patriarch *Jacob* to exclaim, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!*

* Jer. iii. 18. See also xxiii. 8.

† Gen. xlix. 17.

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All this, taken together, may serve to explain, both in doctrine and example, that the people of God are and ever have been *a people hidden* in his counsels, and brought forth from age to age according to his gracious will and appointment.

In another view, looking from their special designation as *heirs of promise* to their peculiar experience as partakers of the *grace of life*, the children of God are hidden and unknown by the world. Their *life* is a hidden one—*hid with Christ in God*: and the world knoweth not them, because it knoweth not him.

Christ is their head, and, as such, the author and fountain of this hidden and spiritual life. They live upon him for it and in it. They have nothing of their own, but sin; and upon sin they cannot live, but must oppose and abhor it. In order to conquer the corrupt and inbred life, which they derive from their fallen nature, they draw out of *the fulness* of their Redeemer *grace for grace*; and by this mean, and only by this, they grow into his life, and therefore are said, because their Redeemer is divine, to *increase with all the increase of God*. They *are of God*, according to his own will, *in Christ Jesus, who from the Godhead* (απο Θεου) *is made unto them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*: and thus they are enabled to obey what is written, *He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*; for, in themselves, they find, that they have neither right, nor pretence, to glory at all.

When the sun is low or oblique, the shadow of a man is long and evident, perhaps an hundred fold longer than his real substance, till at length it is swallowed up in

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in darkness; but when its rays are full and direct, the shadow is short or wholly unseen, but the man is surrounded with light. So is it with men in relation to their knowledge and station in Christ. When he is much to them, they feel themselves to be little, or nothing: when they are much in themselves, they are fond of appearing great in length, though it be all but vanity or shadow, which shall soon be done away. He is not the greatest Christian, who appears such outwardly; but he, whom the Lord approves, and hath united to himself by the strongest inward faith, humility, and love. His choicest *secret ones* are not only lowest in their own eyes, but perhaps in the eyes of their professing brethren. They may probably shine out at the last from such obscurity of talents and obscurity of place and condition, as may astonish every beholder, and lead him to admire that order of God, who makes small things great, and sets what man thought to be last and lowest, in the uppermost seat before him.

This *hidden man of the heart*, or as the psalmist calls it, this *hidden thing* or *part*,* is the *new man*, which is not *corruptible*, because it is *renewed after the image of him that created him*. And this new or hidden man is sustained by new and secret food, even by the *hidden manna*, the life and grace of Christ, communicated by his Spirit. By this it is replenished, and proceeds to the measure of the stature appointed.

As this is a true and invincible life in its essence, so, like the natural life, it appears to have its own peculiar

* Ps. li. 6.

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effects and operations. It is capable of spiritual and divine knowledge, of which the natural man, however ingenious or learned in natural things, is truly incapable. He of himself cannot *taste, experience,* or *exercise,* this gracious wisdom; and therefore, if he could form a thousand speculations upon divine ideas cloathed with human words, he cannot attain to the substance and life of this heavenly thing; not more than a person who beholds the picture of a feast can be said to enjoy one. He may look, and contemplate, and starve. This wisdom is, therefore, called *the hidden wisdom,* which the princes or the great of this world, that is, those who are high in themselves, cannot know; because God is said *to reveal its truths by his Spirit,* and to him only *that is spiritual,** who as such is alone prepared for their reception. And it is also called the *secret* (סוד, the fundamental or established counsel) *of the Lord, which is with them that fear him,* and with them only. By this wisdom, the believer is taught where to find strength for every occasion, pardon for every sin, justification for every demand of the law, holiness against every pollution, victory over death and hell, and life and peace for evermore. He prays in secret to him that seeth in secret; or, what is the same in other words, he entereth in spirit into the secret place of the Most High, and dwelleth under the shadow of the Almighty. He casts anchor within the vail, and finds it sure and stedfast in every storm. He lives by the faith of the Son of God, and looks to him as his refuge in every time of need; nor is he, nor shall he ever be, disappointed of his hope.

* 1 Cor. ii. 10, &c.

What

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What a mystery is this life of the Christian to a man of the world? He cannot conceive, how it is possible for any one to love God, whom he hath not seen; or to act dependently upon him in a renunciation of himself; or to live in a serious retirement and obscurity among men, undesirous of, or rather dreading, earthly pomp and worldly glory; or to taste of such superior joys and comforts, as can render insipid all the vain delights, and pleasures, and entertainments, round about him. This is a strange life and business to the natural man; and because he wants a name for it, he gives it a hard one, though wide enough from the right, through his ignorance and inexperience. He therefore hates or despises the Christian, who feels, or ought to feel, in return, none but the kindest emotions of pity for him.

May I enjoy, for my part, this secret and sacred love of my God within my soul; for surely nothing beside can make me happy. I have tried, and others have tried, all possible schemes of pleasure, which the world can afford, or sense can receive; but alas! what are all earthly things but fleeting vanity; or, what fruit can they produce at the last, but keen remorse, and pungent, gloomy, wearisome, vexation of spirit? Thy *secret wisdom*, O my God, conveyed to my heart through thy word, hath greatly delivered me from this doleful path, and guided my feet into the way of peace. True; it is but a *narrow way*; and *few there be that find it*; but the way, however, is *thine*, and infalliably leads up unto *thee*. O make me to learn this pure wisdom secretly; and then shall I walk in thy truth to the end, and no wickedness shall have dominion over me!

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STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS.

THE Holy Ghost employs every kind of similitude, apparent in the objects of nature, to represent the state and the privileges of the children of God. And as a similitude, in some respect or other, really exists between natural and spiritual things; he teaches us, by this example of his own wisdom, to be constantly engaging our thoughts, while we are occupied among earthly matters, to carry them up to the sublime and delightful subjects of an everlasting world.

The children of Adam are all *strangers* upon earth in one relation or another. As they came into the world, and while they continue in their natural state, they are children of wrath, strangers * from the covenants of promise, alienated from the life of God, having no hope, and mere Atheists in the world. But those, who are recon-

* The Old Testament has three words, which are translated *stranger* or *foreigner*, but which in the original have a peculiar or more forcible sense; as may be seen particularly in Exod. xii. 43, &c. The word נֵכָר ver. in 43. means a person, not only a Gentile, but, in the worst sense, a *stranger* and an *alien* to God and his people. In ver. 43. the word תּוֹשָׁב, rendered *foreigner*, implies a *sojourning stranger*, one who lives among God's people, but is not of them. And in ver. 48, 49. The word גֵּר, also rendered *stranger*, denotes one *moved with fear*, and so walking, in a spiritual sense, as a proselyte of the truth, convinced of his need of an interest in the covenant of grace, and privileged to come into it.

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ciled and brought nigh by the blood of Christ, are indeed no longer strangers to God; and yet they must be strangers still, under a new capacity, to the world and their former condition in it. When the Lord *passes over* them, beholding their consciences sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, who is the only means of that *passing over* without vengeance, and therefore called the *passover* itself in the abstract; they are enabled to go forth with power out of the spiritual Egypt, and the bondage of sin, and to become estranged to that tyrant and tyranny, under which they had been held. Through the effectual working of the Spirit of grace, they become mortified in their affections to the former lusts, which ruled over them in the time of their ignorance and estrangement from God, grow more and more dead to self with all its false ambition and groveling views, are at a distance from the life and spirit of the world, and tremble to follow its maxims or to mix with its pursuits. They are taught, and not only taught, but induced, to look upon earth, as a *strange* place, where every object presents a danger, and almost every step a snare; as a region, now far from the Sun of righteousness, where their spiritual nature is exposed to storms, and their new life to deadening cold; in short, as a howling wilderness, where no spiritual bread grows for their souls, but must daily descend from their own country above, and where every kind of enemy and every species of barrenness, want, or emptiness, must continually be found. Like *Israel* of old, *they wander in the wilderness in a solitary way, and find no city to dwell in.* God is their guide through this desert world, they not knowing truly a step of their course without

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out him, but follow him in faith *whither soever he goeth.* They depend upon him to *lead them forth by the right way, that they may go to the city of habitation.* The road is intricate; but their conductor is sure. Thus the redeemed of the Lord are *strangers in a strange land,* and are treated accordingly. Walking in the spirit of their master, the world perceives the alienation, will at least ridicule, and, if permitted, will commonly persecute them for it. Neither the innocency nor the usefulness of their lives can screen them from censure and malignity; but all evil things shall be said of them, which may at any rate be believed, and some which no belief, aided by the keenest prejudices, can possibly swallow. Witness the charge made upon the primitive Christians (as *Tertullian,* who lived within 200 years of Christ, relates it) of murder and adultery, of killing and eating an infant in their nocturnal assemblies, and of contriving to put out the candles in a minute, in order as a signal and an occasion to commit all manner of impurities. Witness almost the same things retailed from age to age again and again, without proof, without sense, and beyond the very conscience of the relaters themselves, even down to the most modern times. And yet, after all, the malice of the world is not abated in itself, though the power of exerting it (blessed be God) is curtailed; for indeed the antipathy of its spirit to the *Spirit which is of God,* is so radical and so entire, as to be absolutely irreconcileable to it. For which reason doubtless it was, that our Lord and his apostle gave forth that standing admonition to the church; *marvel not if the world hate you:*

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you: if ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.†*

Now, as the Christian is and must be a stranger upon earth, averse to its evil maxims and life, and it averse to his; it is expedient for him to be a *pilgrim*, that is, a *passenger*, from the earth to a better country, even the heavenly. He must be a spiritual *Hebrew*, which means the same thing, and must relinquish his own country (like *Abraham*) and his father's house, that is, this present evil world, and the old *Adam* of nature in which he was born. From these he must *pass over the flood*, as the river and the Red sea were passed over of old, or like another *Rubicon*, with a decided purpose, and make the best of his way, under the divine guidance and protection, to the promised land. He cannot fix his thoughts here; for this is *not his rest, because it is polluted.* Thus he becomes a continual sojourner, as all the fathers, all the faithful, ever were.‡ He is engaged in a pilgrimage, and must proceed; for destruction is behind him, but before him an eternal weight of glory. To go backward is horror; to stand still is misery; to fall short is despair. He is, therefore, in earnest upon this most awful, this most necessary, business; nor would he be wrong for a thousand worlds. And consequently, knowing his own weakness, as well as his own infirmity, he is importunate in prayer, watchful in spirit, tender in heart, humble in

* 1 John, iii. 13. † John xv. 19.

‡ 1 Chron. xxix. 15. Ps. xxxix. 12.

life,

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life, and looking (but bewailing that he looks not enough) to Jesus, that he may be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. He walks in the order of providence for this world, and in the spirit of grace for another: and God is his guide in both, according to that sweet promise; *an highway shall be there, and a way* [a certain and prepared way] *and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein;* or, as the latter part might be rendered, *but* HE *himself* [הוּא,] *shall be with them, walking in the way, and even the fools shall not err therein.**

In thus being strangers, and pilgrims, and Hebrews, they are also, truly and spiritually, the only *Jews*, that is, the confessors and glorifiers of Jehovah. *He is not a Jew* (says the apostle) *who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart; in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God.* Three things made a Jew in the flesh, who is but a shadow of the Jew in the spirit, namely, 1. circumcision: 2. baptism: 3. sacrifice. And the purport of these constitutes a Christian, who is the true and living Jew; 1. circumcision of the heart, or cutting off the old man with his deeds, so as not to live by him as the principle of life towards God. 2. The baptism or regeneration of the Spirit, which is putting on the new man, even Christ Jesus, as the substance of spiritual life. 3. The sacrifice of the whole body, soul, and spirit, to the will of Jehovah through Christ Jesus.

* Isa. xxxv. 8.

Where

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Where this hath taken place, the soul is brought into communion with God as a friend and a child, is enabled to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, is rendered a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, is brought into the bond of the everlasting covenant in perception and experience, and hath a right and title through Christ to all the promises, mercies, blessings, and truths, revealed in the gospel. This gospel is the common charter and deed of conveyance to the heirs of salvation, who are privileged now to cry, without a falsehood, *Abba, Father;* and, as children, to put in a rightful and acknowledged claim to all that is purchased and all that is prepared for them. They are but of one nation under the same king, one chosen generation under the same head, one family under the same Father; all dear to him, and by him provided for and protected continually. O what a transcendent glory is put upon poor worms, when redeemed from the earth, and made kings and priests unto God and the Father for evermore! What honourable thoughts should the Christian have of his own renewed state and condition! How clear should he strive to keep it from all impeachment and degradation! How full of praise should he be to Father, Son, and Spirit, the one Jehovah, who hath done so much for him, and will yet do more, in time and in eternity!

O my God, when I think upon these things, often doth my heart melt within me, and my soul is ready to cry out; Who, and what am I, that thou hast brought me hitherto! What, but love divine, could have taken me from the base and vile condition of a stranger to God, of a rebel, a slave, a traitor against him, and have raised me, not

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not only to the honourable degree of a servant, which would have been an honour that the first of angels rejoices to receive and infinitely beyond my expectations, but to the affectionate relation of a friend and a son, and that son an heir, even an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ Jesus of an exceeding and eternal weight of glory? What hath God wrought for this poor unworthy soul! How hath he made me to rejoice in the earnest and assurance of his favor! Let, O let this kindle in *my* heart the warmest flame of affection and gratitude; and let me learn more and more to become a stranger to all but thee, my God, and what belongs to thy truth and salvation. Let me daily feel and remember, that I am but a pilgrim, a passenger, a sojourner here; and consequently let the staff be always in my hand, my loins girt, and my lamp burning; ever waiting, in meek and patient expectation, for the coming or calling of my Lord Redeemer. Thus may I stand oft upon my watch-tower, eagerly looking for the *Aijaleth Shahar*, the hind of the morning,* the appearance of the Sun of righteousness to bless me me in his kingdom. I am but a poor traveller, weak and sore beset within and without: Lord, help me! Strengthen me for my journey, and quicken my pace in it, that I may not be *slow of heart to believe*, nor dull in spirit to follow thee, in the ways of thy salvation!

* Ps. xxii. *Title.*

CHOSEN

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CHOSEN GENERATION.

WE have already considered the purport of the word CHOSEN, as it relates to the people of God; and, therefore, in this place, it may be proper to treat more especially of the word GENERATION.

Generation hath various senses in the holy scriptures. But its primary and leading sense, and its sense particularly in this title, seems to be a *nation*, a *race*, or *family*, derived from *one stock*, or progenitor. The original word is taken from a root, which signifies to *form* as well as to *bring forth*; and the figure, applied to the children of God, declares, that they are *begotten again unto a lively hope*,* *of God's own will with the word of truth*,† and so are *born again of the spirit* of God,‡ *not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the* WORD *of God who liveth and abideth for ever*.§ They were once of the generation of the world, and a seed of evil doers; but now, in Christ, they are chosen from that corrupt stock and generation, and brought into a new stock, even *the generation of God's children*.

Because of this new state into which the redeemed are

* 1 Pet. i. 3. † James i. 18.
‡ John iii. 5. § 1 Pet. i. 23.
‖ Ps. lxxiii. 15.

brought

brought, and because of this new nature, even the divine nature, of which they partake;* all of which is by the wonderful operation and mere grace of God; the words *new creation, regeneration, first resurrection, adoption,* &c, are used to point out both that express and free agency of the Most High, and also the privileges which they rightly obtain by being thus truly and spiritually his *new-born* children. These words, employed by God, are not mere words of flourish and ornament, such as we see in the writings of men; but really denote that extraordinary alteration of mind and affections, which every real Christian feels within himself upon his conversion, and which, by the very terms of it, can be attributed to no less a power than that of God. For, as it would be monstrous to common sense to say, that a person created or produced himself and formed all the faculties of human nature within him; so is it no less absurd, in the spiritual view, to affirm, that any believer raised himself from the death of sins, or could be raised by the mere talking of another creature like himself, or without the immediate intervention of the Lord. Perhaps, it is more absurd to affirm this than the other, because the production or renovation of matter is evidently of less consequence and more gross than the production or change of a spirit from an almost diabolic and miserable state to a divine and happy being. Christ, with a word, could raise a dead body; but he was constrained to die and rise again, in order to quicken the spiritually dead and to induce in them *the newness of life.*

* 2 Pet. i. 4. Heb. iii. 14. vi. 4.

All

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All this generation proceeds in Christ, through the love of the Father, and by the power of the Holy Spirit.* Thus the cxth Psalm speaks of it as a matter of divine counsel, and as a particular revelation of it from JEHOVAH to the ADONAI *Messiah: Sit thou at my right hand*, that is, possess my almighty power, till thine enemies, Satan, sin, and death, be subdued. JEHOVAH *shall send the rod of thy strength*, thy commissioned power as the King and High priest of thy people, *out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing* [נדבת, free willingness itself] *in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness. From the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth;* or, "more than the dew from the womb of the morning is the dew of thy progeny." This generation shall be numerous as the drops of dew in the morning, shining with resplendent holiness, when the Sun of righteousness shall arise

* To this purpose speaks very excellently the judicious *Hooker*. "That which moveth God to work is goodness, and that which ordereth his work is wisdom, and that which perfecteth his work is power. All things which God, in their times and seasons, hath brought forth, were eternally and before all times in God; as a work unbegun is in the artificer, which afterward bringeth it unto effect. Therefore whatsoever we do behold now in this present world, it was enwrapped within the bowels of divine mercy, written in the book of eternal wisdom, and held in the hands of omnipotent power, the first foundations of the world being as yet unlaid. So that all things which God hath made are in that respect the offspring of God: they are *in him* as effects in their highest cause; he likewise is actually in them, the assistance and influence of the Deity being *their life*. Let hereunto SAVING EFFICACY be added, and it bringeth forth a special offspring among men, containing them to whom God hath himself given the gracious and amiable name of SONS. *Eccl. Polit.* B. v.

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upon them in the appointed day of his power. Hence these *children of the resurrection* * are said to be *a great multitude, which no man could number*; though, compared to the world at large out of which they are taken, they are called *a little flock* and a *small remnant*.

As this generation is from Christ, they are *renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created them*. There is not only an alteration in their circumstances, but a change in their life. As they are new-born and brought into a new and holy family, they have the spirit and likeness of the family: and this is one of their testimonies, that they really belong to it. It is not possible to believe, that a creature, deformed with all the ugliness of sin, wallowing with the swine of this world in impurity, and associating with the enemies of God's houshold, can at any rate be a child of God. There are no such monstrous births as these from the Holy Spirit. Our Lord says of such, *Ye are of your father the devil, and his works ye will do*. As by their fruits, we can discern the children of God from the children of Belial; so the generation of God's children *being made free from sin*, and from its pre-

* Luke xx. 36. They are *children of the resurrection*, because of their *special appointment* to life eternal, and therefore they *can die no more*, as our Lord declares. This is a common phrase among the Hebrews to denote a particular condition or allotment; thus, children of Belial, children of wrath, children of death, children of this world, the child of a house, &c. signified their devoted state of life or mind. So the learned *Constantine L'Emperor* observes, *Filius hujus vel illius rei apud Hebræos dicitur, qui specialem quandam ad rem istam habet relationem; adeo ut licet aliis etiam competat, sibi speciali et proprio respectu conveniat*. De leg. Hebr. c. iv. § 6.

vailing

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vailing power, as one of their greatest mercies and privileges,* *they have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.* They are redeemed *from* sin, and therefore, in the strength of their Lord, they fight against it and prevail. This is the *seal* of the Spirit and the *fruit* of the Spirit: and this *inward* seal, and *outward* fruit are the proofs to them, that indeed they are partakers of the grace of life, and that the never-ending kingdom of God is set up in their hearts. But if professors can produce nothing of this kind in the court of their own consciences, or in the view of the world; let them not deceive themselves with the thought of belonging to God's *chosen generation*, but strictly *examine and prove their own selves*, as in the presence of God, whether *Christ be in them* or not, or whether the prophet's words may not be fulfilled in each of them, *He feedeth them on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right-hand?* † They, that are born of God, have the proper life of their Father in them; and that life, being a life of power and holiness, will most certainly discover itself in those actions which are peculiar to it.

We do not contend, in these important subjects for mere notions and opinions, for the shadows of speculation or abstract theories, but for real, living, and substantial truth, which we have not only *heard* and *seen* and *looked upon* with a spiritual ear and eye, but which we have *handled*, and *tasted*, and enjoyed, by a heart-felt and confirmed experience. And therefore we can humbly,

* Rom. vi. 14. † Isa. xliv. 20.

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yet cheerfully and confidently, say with the apostle, *we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son* JESUS CHRIST; and that *this*, this Christ, *is the true God, and eternal life* to our souls.

We know likewise, that we are of this generation, because of the opposition, which the other generation is ever making both to us and to this great truth of our regeneration in Christ, which they hate, scoff at, and deny. *They are of the world, and therefore the world heareth them*, approveth their sayings, applaudeth their spirit, and joineth with them in their opposition to the great principles and experiences of the gospel. If we were of the world, the world would love its own; but nothing fills it with so much bitterness and enmity against us, that we should be *chosen out of the world*, though God himself hath expressly declared it.

"But doth not this election lead to looseness, or at least carelessness, of life?"—But how can this be, when we know not our election, and have no proof of it to comfort us, but by the very contrary effect in our hearts and lives? Let it be remembered, that we do not begin with God, nor proceed with God, no, nor rest ourselves upon God, merely as his *elect* children; but as his *called, renewed*, and *sanctified* children; from whence we gather, to our unspeakable comfort and to our enlivening diligence, that *therefore* we are *chosen* in Christ, that God hath loved us with an everlasting love, and that, as *his gifts and callings are without repentance*, our

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our faith, hope, and labor of love, shall not be in vain in the Lord.

So far is our vocation in Christ from leading us into sin, that, immediately upon it, but never in reality before, we commence a warfare against the very *being*, as well as *exercise*, of evil, as it exists in the world, the flesh, and the devil. This warfare continues without a truce; for every remission or parley is attended with danger. We do not indeed go to the war in our own strength or at our own charge, for then we should soon be lost. But we do as the *Israelites* did: we fight, not with horses, or chariots, or depend upon foreign or human alliances (for those people were directed to avoid all these, and did avoid them in their best times), but with the arm of the living God, whose strength is made perfect in our weakness, and who gives the victory to faith, which relies upon him and commits the whole warfare to his care and management. But war we must, notwithstanding: we are expressly and indispensably called to it. And, for our comfort, we may be assured, that the hostility of these foes against the soul is, among other proofs, a sure token of its union with Christ; and the victory over them another corroborating testimony of its eternal redemption by him. The strong one armed keepeth his house and his goods in peace, till one stronger than he shall overcome and bind him, and despoil him of his plunder and abode.

Without "the godly consideration" of our election in Christ, it seems hardly possible to maintain that divine plerophory, or full assurance, of faith, and hope, and understanding to the end, which is held forth as the privi-

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lege of the children of God. For how can any rejoice truly in an uncertain event? And how can any event be certain, unless it be ordered and planned, according to those divine counsels and that covenant, which foresee and foreordain all circumstances, beyond defeat or disappointment? It is the certitude of faith concerning a most certain salvation, which leads the heart to combat well with difficulties and enemies, and which sooner or later crowns it with *joy unspeakable and full of glory.* They, therefore, who doubt of their election, may possibly be within the bond of the covenant; but most evidently cannot enjoy it, while they continue in doubting. And this doubting, and the want of comfort which follows it, are certainly not to be ranked among the privileges of believers; nor have they any tendency to strengthen hand or heart in the service and glory of God.

It is a striking passage in the song of blessed *Hannah: My heart rejoiceth in the Lord; mine horn is exalted in the* LORD; *my mouth is enlarged over mine enimies;* BECAUSE *I rejoice in thy salvation.* Her joy in the Lord enabled her to triumph over her enemies. Confidence and rejoicing in Christ do not lead men to sin, but to conquest over it. 'Tis doubt, which brings darkness, and darkness deadness, and deadness subjection to sin, and this subjection ruin. If *Jehoshaphat* had doubted of the promise, he had never rejoiced over his enemies; but he believed and sang praises even before the victory, from the certainty of that event: and his faith was crowned with an inconceivable success.* The faithfulness and

* 2 Chron. xx.

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omnipotence of JEHOVAH were engaged in his behalf, and against him, who can resist or prevail?

LORD, keep this reviving privilege and felicity of thy chosen clear in my sight, and warm on my heart, as long as I live; that I too, unworthy as I am in myself, may give thanks with thine inheritance, for all this unutterable mercy, this inestimably precious salvation! O let this joy of the Lord be my strength in this house of my pilgrimage, that I may go on with my warfare, undismayed, unwearied, unsubdued. My flesh, and the false and foolish wisdom of the flesh, in conjunction with my other enemies, fight against the truth and reality of thy sovereign and distinguishing mercy, and would fain be finding motives subordinate, if not contrary, to thine, in all thy method of redemption. It would lead me to my vile self, and to creatures, to the low and deceitful workings of a fallen heart, instead of to thee and thy pure will and word. Lord, keep me from a delusion, which can only entail upon me doubt and gloom, and all the miseries which must attend an uncertain relation to thee. Rather, let me contemplate, what thou hast done for me by Christ, and in me by thy Spirit, and what thou hast promised yet to do, according to that love and faithfulness which are from everlasting to everlasting, uncircumscribed by all the thoughts and limits of thy most exalted creatures. In this blessed hope, this joyful communion of thy grace, let me live and honor thee, and ardently seek to honor thee more and more, in whatever so mean a being can perform through thy strength working in me. And when all that is to be done in me or by me, in this my day and generation upon earth, is performed;

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O remove me, according to thy holy promise, to the fathers gone before me, to the general assembly of the first-born who are written in heaven, to the spirits of the just made perfect, and (to crown all) to JESUS the mediator of the new covenant, with whom I shall abide, and to whom I shall be made like for ever and ever! O wonderful manifestation of eternal love! O glorious mystery delightfully unfolded! And what can I say, now on earth, or hereafter in heaven, but in the spirit if not the words of that charming song; *Bless the* LORD, *O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the* LORD, *all his hosts; ye ministers of his that do his pleasure. Bless the* LORD, *all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the* LORD, *O my soul!* Amen, *Hallelu*-JAH!

ROYAL

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ROYAL PRIESTHOOD.

THIS title, which is given to the people of God, in 1 Pet. ii. 9.* is of the same import with that in Exod. xix. 6. a *kingdom of priests*, and with another in Rev. i. 6. *kings and priests.* They are words used to express the *power* and *dignity*, with the *grace* and *holiness*, conferred upon the children of God.

No man can make himself a *king*, without being a usurper; nor can any ordain himself a *priest*, without authority. These are offices, which none can take to themselves, *save they who are called of God*; as were *Saul* and *David*, for the kingdom; and, for the priesthood, *Aaron*. Those, who *intrude* themselves into these stations without a proper vocation, are too commonly *puffed up by their fleshly mind*, and come to nothing.

* "The sense is, as though the Lord had said, Ye shall be to me a people, in whom I will constitute a kingdom and priesthood; or, as the Chaldee paraphrast expounds it, *To me ye shall be kings and priests.* For all these in a certain manner, by conjunction of soul, are kings in the one King [Christ,] and all are priests in him the one great High-priest. Whence, there is no impropriety in saying, that all the people offered sacrifice [as it is said of *Solomon* and the *Israelites* in 1 Kings viii. 62, 63.] though the priest only actually performed it." ESTIUS in Exod. xix. 6.

These

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These *king-priests*, therefore, are appointed of God to participate a *kingdom which cannot be shaken*, and for this purpose (according to the outward sign) are spiritually *anointed* by him, which is the token and qualification of their calling and station. None are truly his spiritual priests, but those who have *the unction of the Holy One*, and are taught of God: and that is never put upon *man's flesh*, or corrupt nature, nor yet upon a *stranger* to the grace and covenant of God. Exod. xxx. 32, 33.

They are called *kings*, because they have a royal will and sublime spirit imparted to them, by which they are enabled to look down upon the mean and beggarly spirit of this world, occupied in trash and sin, and to look up, with dignity and delight, to that wisdom and glory and all its fruitful and happy effects, which the KING *of kings* hath appointed for them. They have also a *power* to reign in righteousness over evil, and the authors of evil; imperfectly here, because of a corrupt body which they bear about them, but perfectly in the life to come, when they shall be absolutely holy and victorious for ever. Their dominion shall be extensive; how extensive, we cannot conceive through the medium of our frail and feeble sense; and of its duration there shall be no end. Their very crown is a crown of *glory* and of *righteousness*, and, like their inheritance and kingdom, *incorruptible*, *undefiled*, and *unfading*.

They are named *priests*, because of their sacred and unalterable character, and because of the privilege, by which they intimately and nearly approach the HIGHEST,

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ner,* and offer up spiritual sacrifices and services before him. They are clothed with the bright and spotless robes of righteousness and salvation, which shine upon them with glory and beauty. Their holy anointing teacheth them wonderful things of Jehovah's wisdom and truth; and they are led on from *knowing and seeing only in part*, through the heavy impressions of a fallen animal nature, to a blissful state, where they *shall know even as also they are known*.

The word *priest*, being only a contraction of *preoster* as that is of *presbyter*, signifies strictly an *elder*, one who is wise and established in the things of God, and therefore able to guide and instruct others. In the spiritual sense, all God's people are and shall be made wise and learned in his holy ways, filled with apprehensions of his sublime glory, and led on to more and more perfect investigations of his eternal and infinite truth, with increase of capacity and without end of being. *Jacob* loved *Joseph*, not merely *because he was the son of his old age*, as our translation renders the clause; but *because he was the son of the elders himself to him*, that is, wise, and wise in spiritual things, as the elders:† so their heavenly father, having furnished their minds with *wisdom from above*, loves his children in the gift and for the gift, which he himself hath bestowed upon them.

* This high privilege of their spiritual character was prefigured by the legal priests, as it appears from Exod. xix. 22, and Lev. x. 3, and confirmed by Heb. x. 19, Rom. v. 2. Eph. iii. 12. The word כהן not only signifies *priest*, but *prince*, in high authority. Such was *Potipherah*, *Joseph's* father-in-law; and such were *David's* sons, in 2 Sam. viii. 18.

† Gen. xxxvii. 3.

As

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As *priests* to *God and the Father*, or *of God and of Christ*, they are also the true *Aaronites*. The name is taken from a root, which signifies to proclaim, to praise, to cry out for joy. They *exalt* the Lord, and *bless* his holy name: And hereafter, *like* the *morning stars*, they shall lift up their voices for ever, and *sing together* and *shout for joy*, ascribing glory, and honour, and blessing, to God and the Lamb their Redeemer.

They are likewise the true and spiritual *Levites*. The word *Levi* (as we shall observe hereafter) signifies *joined*; and the tribe, who bare that name, were *joined* to *Aaron** as his brethren, and were *given* to him for the service of holy things:† so the redeemed are *joined to the Lord*‡ the great high priest of their profession, in one Spirit, and were *given to him* § of the Father, that they might be *holy and without blame before him in love*, and *serve him in righteousness and true holiness for ever*.

They are not confined to any particular stock or nation, as of old; but the Gentile believers are equally *brethren* with the Jews, equally *come to the holy mountain* the spiritual *Jerusalem*, are alike a sacred *offering in a clean vessel*, and *taken for priests and levites* unto JEHOVAH.‖ Thus all *the ends of the earth* are *brought nigh* unto God: Thus all *the earth*, the *whole world*, that is Gentiles as well as Jews, having faith in the Redeemer, are made *his own*; and to these, to the *whole* of these whatever be their nation or tongue, he is named, though

* Numb. xviii. 2. † Numb. iii. 9.
‡ 1 Cor. vi. 17. § John vi. 37.
‖ Isa. lxvi. 20, 21. and lxi, 6.

in

in himself *Jehovah Sabaoth*, their *Husband, their Redeemer*, their *Holy One*, their *Alehim*, and their *Adon*. †

All

† Isa. liv. 5. Mic. iv. 13. 1 John ii. 1, 2. Some, contrary to the general sense and *analogy of faith*, which run through the whole scriptures, have ventured to assert an *universal redemption* from this 1 John ii. 1, 2. *If any* man *sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

In the first place; the word τις should not have been translated *any man*, but *any one*; i. e. of those to whom and for whom the apostle writes, who have *the word of God in them*, who *walk in the light*, who *have fellowship with the Father and with Christ*, and whom therefore the apostle calls, *my little*, or *dear, children*, because of such he was the means of conversion. These are the persons, whom he places with himself, when he says, that Christ is the *propitiation for* OUR *sins*.

Next; The word *world* hath various acceptations in scripture; sometimes meaning, the whole universe, or creation, of God; sometimes, the world we live upon; sometimes, the evil people in distinction from God's people; sometimes, God's people only for whom the world stands; sometimes, a dispensation of God existing in the world, and especially in the time of the Jews, who distinguished *the present world* (their then state under the law of Moses) from *the world to come* (as Heb. ii. 5.) or the dispensation under the Messiah. These are some of the chief senses of the word *world* in the Bible; to which we may add those very intelligible distinctions in the usage of the term among men, as great, the political, the commercial, the wicked, or the religious, world.

But, as the CHURCH upon earth is the real and important part of the world in God's eye, it is often called, and especially in the prophetic writings, by the names *earth*, or *land*, or *world*, itself; metonymically or typically shadowing forth that future *land of uprightness* or *the living*, that *new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness*, that perfect *world the face of which the Israel* of God *shall fill with fruit*. Isa. xxvii. 6. Of this region, denoting the

CHURCH,

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All these, in the aggregate, are a *royal priesthood* in their relation to Christ, a *kingdom of priests* under him and

CHURCH, it is that God says, in a day of separation: *I Jehovah am in the midst of the earth.* Exod. viii. 22. See Deut. xxiii. 14. Isa. xii. 6. And many others texts.—Again: *give ear, O ye heavens and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth,* Deut. xxxii. 1. The address is, according to the genius of the Hebrew tongue and the phrase of the Eastern people, to the rulers of the church under the name of the *heavens,* and to the people of the church at large under the title of the *earth.* See, upon this manner of speech, MEDE upon 2 Pet. iii. p. 616.—Again, speaking of those whom God prepares *for the throne of glory,* the Holy Ghost says; *the pillars of the earth are the Lord's; and he hath set the world upon them:* i. e. Though his people are among the poor and despised, they are the pillars of his church, and of the world which stands for them. 1 Sam. ii. 8. Ps. lxxv. 3.—Again: *Naaman* desired two mules load of the earth of Israel, which was consecrated to the Lord, to denote his conversion to God, and his fellowship with his church in the world. 2 Kings v. 17. with Exod. xx. 24.—Again: The *seed* of Christ was to *inherit the earth,* implying their spiritual heirship of the kingdom of glory. Ps. xxv. 13. Isa. lxv. 9. Matth. v. 5.—This earth God *waters,* or teaches; Ps. lxv. 9. is *satisfied*; Ps. civ. 13. is *excellent* in *fruits*; Isa. iv. 2. is *filled with the knowledge of the Lord;* Hab. ii. 4.—In this view, the land of *Canaan* was the Lord's, and was *never to be sold,* like *Esau's* birth-right or portion in the world; Lev. xxv. 23. It was the land, typifying this spiritual land or church, which *the Lord cared for,* and constantly guarded with his *eye*: Deut. xi. 12. Ps. xxxii. 8. In which he raised *springs of water* or grace. Isa. xxxv. 7. And to whom he says, *Fear not.* Joel ii. 22, 23. This *land* is the bride of Christ, and is *married to the Lord* and made thereby his own for ever. Isa. lxii. 4. This is *the world* to whom Christ, the *bread of God, giveth life* and nourishment; John vi. 33. But not to the world at large, for these he *knoweth not* and *prayeth not for.* They are *not of his sheep,* but of the goats, whom he never bought, and for whom he never laid down his precious life. They are therefore *that* world, which ὁ κόσμος, IS NOT ABLE *to receive*

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and in him, a *priestly royalty* with respect to its holiness and superiority to the world, and *kings* and *priests* as to their own particular happiness and endowments. They are chosen of God, called of God, anointed of God, supported and finally crowned by God. Their kingdom and inheritance are not of this world, nor of the darkness of this world, but *in light*, in transparent excellency of wisdom, worth, and glory, into which nothing defiled or unclean can enter, and into which they only enter, because they are purified, and *their robes made white, in the blood of the Lamb.* Their priesthood and dominion is everlasting, through the grace and power of that anointing or consecration, with which God intended by his covenant to bless them before the world began.

The happy enjoyment of this royal and holy distinction enables them, through grace, to look down upon the world, and all its lying and dying vanities, with a dig-

ceive the Spirit of truth, John xiv. 17. While *his own* world can, and is thereby *reconciled to God.* 2 Cor. v. 19. There is, in short, a WHOLE WORLD *which Satan deceiveth*, Rev. xii. 9. because he is *the prince and god of it*, John xiv. 30. 2 Cor. iv. 4. And there is another WHOLE WORLD, the *elect* of God, which it is *not posible* for him, or his agents, either fully or finally to *deceive* or destroy; Matth. xxiv. 24. See the reason in John xvi. 13. and x. 5. 27, 28.

This last is THE *whole world*, of whom St. John speaks in his first epistle above-mentioned; *in which there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free; but Christ is all, and in all.* Briefly; it is THE WHOLE CHURCH OF GOD, without distinction of age or nation, from the beginning to the end of time. For these only he is *the propitiation through faith in his blood*; because no others have either faith to believe in it, or any real concern to obtain it.

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nified pity and commiserating contempt of mind. The possession of true greatness renders insipid the imaginary greatness of earth and time. A crown, an unfading crown, a bright and unfading crown of glory, is in the view of their faith; and they look for a kingdom, (very unlike all terrestrial kingdoms) even for *a kingdom which cannot be shaken.* *

LORD, who and what are thy people, that thou shouldest raise and endue them with so high and holy a calling as this! That thou shouldest not only make them kings and priests, but kings, by a wonderful association, in one supreme and everlasting King, CHRIST JESUS, and also priests in him the perfect and perpetual High-Priest in the holiest of all! So great and glorious a change shall, one day, pass upon them, as shall fill all heaven with love, and wonder, and unutterable joy!

And O that I, feeble and almost insignificant worm as I am, may be made a partaker of this astonishing change, which only divine grace could imagine, and only infinite power could perform! Lord, what am I, and what is my father's house, a poor undone *Adam* with a ruined progeny, that thou hast brought me even hitherto, that thou hast not left me in the stupidity of sin and unbelief, but

* "Nothing can be called great (said an ingenious heathen) which to contemn is great. Thus riches, honours, dignities, authorities, and whatever else may have the outward pomp of this worldly theatre, can never be esteemed as things extraordinarily good, since the very holding them cheap is no common good. Indeed, those, who enjoy them, are not so much entiled to admiration as those who can look down upon them with a noble superiority of mind." LONGIN. *de Sublim.* § vii.

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hast made me sensible in the least degree of thine unutterable benefits, and that thou hast set before my longing heart such an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of man to conceive! O what a debt of love and gratitude do I owe to thee! and how shall I pay it! I must be more and more in debt even for grace to feel and to acknowledge the mercy: and all my glories and all my joys, throughout eternity, will and must be incessant accumulations of thy favour and goodness to my redeemed soul. How great then is thy goodness, how great thy beauty, JEHOVAH, King of saints! My soul, thou knowest, often gaspeth for thee, as the thirsty and barren land for the replenishing stream; nor can I be filled, nor do I desire to be filled, with any thing but THEE, thou pure fountain of perpetual good. My soul waiteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God!—*Why art thou* then *cast down, O my soul, and why art thou* ever *disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*

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PECULIAR PEOPLE; OR, HOLY NATION.

THESE terms are nearly synonimous, and relate to the children of God under the idea of his particular government, as their *king* and *ruler*. The temporal theocracy, or divine government, of the Jews, was a shadow of that spiritual theocracy, which the great Redeemer maintains over his peculiar people, his sacred nation, in grace and glory.

The terms express a union or conjunction of the people of God, as individuals, into one body or interest, and the inviolable right or nearness of regard, which God through Christ is pleased to have over and for them.* They are one

* 1 Pet. ii. 9. Λαος εις περιποιησιν, *a people for purchase*, i. e. purchased; and therefore they are called in Eph. i. 14. (η περιποιησις) *the purchased possession*; are said in Acts xx. 28. to be *purchased* with the blood of God; *are not appointed unto wrath, but* (εις περιποιησιν) *to the purchased possession of salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ*, 1 Thes. v. 9. or, (εις περιποιησιν) *to the purchased possession of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*. 2 Thess. ii. 14. and therefore those *are not of them, who draw back unto perdition, but those that believe* (εις περιποιησιν) *to the purchased possession*, or *salvation*, or *conservation of the soul*, Heb. x. 39. Hence believers are called (λαον περιουσιον) *a peculiar people*, a treasure of delight, *unto the Lord*. Tit. ii. 14. *Mede* translates it, "a supernumerary, or superabounding people; a people wherein God hath a superlative propriety and interest." Oper. p. 125.—The apostles apply the term, first literally given to the *Israelites*, in its strict and spiritual

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one with each other in privilege and portion; and they are all one in Christ Jesus their head, for government and direction.

The *peculiarity* and *holiness*, affixed to their name, imply *distinction* and *separation* from all others. They are no longer *common* or *unclean*, when once brought into this happy state; not such, as they were before, and as every one else must necessarily be, who is out of it.

Being God's *sacred peculiar*, bought and redeemed with blood or a life inestimably precious, they must be counted dear and valuable in his sight according to the price laid down in their behalf. It is the strongest argument of the high value which God hath set upon his people, that he spared not his Son for their sakes, but admitted him as a sacrifice for their remission: and it is no less a convincing proof of the exceeding great love of Christ towards them, in becoming a willing victim of the divine justice, in their place and stead. Surely, what is so highly prized, and so dearly purchased, can never be forgotten, rejected, or lost.

The terms express and imply all this, and much more, for the edification and consolation of the redeemed. They are God's own words, and meant to convey truths and

spiritual sense, to all the people of God. Thus, in Deut. vii. 6. the *holy people chosen* are עם סגלה a special, a peculiar, a treasured, a precious, a delightful people, unto the Lord; for all this the word signifies. See also Deut. xiv. 2. xxvi. 18. Exod. xix. 5. *David* applies the word to his *own proper good* or *treasure*, 1 Chron. xxix. 3. And in Mal. iii. 17. it is said of these people; *they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, for the day when I make up my jewels* (סגלה) or my peculiar treasure; *and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him*. See Deut. xxxiii. 3.

principles

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principles of of the deepest importance. The names are *names of fact* and *reality*, do positively express a *particular state* and *condition*, and have nothing of abstract or metaphysical ideas and notions within them. They were calculated, not to amuse, but to instruct and edify the soul.

The people of God are a peculiar people and an holy nation, not now confined, as of old, to one spot or society; but gathered from any or every age, language, and nation, throughout the world. They are, consequently, God's own selection and appointment. It is impossible for a man to do this great work for himself, in the very nature of it; perhaps more impossible than for a creature in a lower form to raise himself into a higher. A beast cannot render itself into a man; nor a man become an angel. Add to all this; sin and the averseness of sin to this very condition and change, are entirely in the way; so that besides the exaltation, there is a renovation of nature necessary, which respecting a man for himself, or any creature for him, appears utterly impossible. Hence, the conclusion is inevitable, that the *choice* and the *work* must be of God, and of him alone.

This truth is so apparent in almost all the terms and declarations of the Bible, that it is matter of amazement how any can venture to doubt or deny it. But people do not read the Bible, for instruction in this matter. They consult their own corrupt reason and are counsellors for themselves. It is not possible, therefore, that they should have the mind and judgement of God with them; for, as *the natural man receiveth not*, and *cannot know, the things of the Spirit of God*, on the one hand; so, on the

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the other, *the wisdom of this world is foolishness with him;* and, in his sight, *the thoughts of the wisest are but vain.**

The doctrine, conveyed by these names, is not a dry notion, or speculative opinion, but a solid and perpetual reality. What God calls, is what he calls. Name and being, with him, and in his language, are one and the same. It is, indeed, otherwise with men, because they are fallen from him; and, therefore, people have been called *Jews*, who were not truly so; and others have assumed the title of *Christians*, who loved only the credit of the name. In the Bible, we find counter-distinctions for these kinds of persons. The false Jews are surnamed *Ammonites*, *Moabites*†, *Edomites*‡, *Ephraimites*;§ names of abatement or abhorrence: and the false Christians are entitled, according to those particular sins and follies, under which they most eminently serve.

The profession of a name, or the performance of an ordinance, if there be nothing more in either than the sound or the show, is of no importance in the sight of God. Some carnal Jews called themselves *Abraham's seed;* but Christ, who knew them better than they knew themselves, declared them to be *children of the devil.*|| Others were ready enough to bring sacrifices to the altar, according to the letter of the law; but knowing not the spirit of it, their formal service was accounted murder of the creatures, or the slaying of a dog, or pouring out the blood

* 1 Cor. ii. 14. and iii. 19, 20.

† Jer. ix. 26.

‡ Isa. lxiii. 1. Obad. 1.

§ Ps. lxxviii. 9. Isa. xxviii. 1. Hos. v. 3, &c.

|| John viii. 44.

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of swine,* in the sight of the Lord. The carrying of an holy name, or bearing about a holy thing or profession, will not purify the soul; but a person, defiled with his sin, contaminates all he touches, and turns even his fairest services into dead works, odious and abominable.†

To testify, that God's people are his own, and of his own chusing, the sons of *Israel* were taken from among the nations, as the figure of a select race; and afterwards, when the fulness of time came at the appearance of the long-expected *Messiah*, various persons, and multitudes of persons, received the grace to become faithful, and served to compose the one peculiar people and holy nation. This was the fulfilment of the promise made to *Jacob*, and for a testimony of which God bestowed upon him the name of *Israel*. *I am* AL-SHADDAI [the Almighty or all-sufficient God] *be fruitful and multiply* [in the spiritual as well as natural sense] *a nation and* קהל *a church*, or *assemblage, of nations shall be of thee; and kings* [kings and priests unto God, as well as earthly princes] *shall spring forth from thy loins*: that is; he should assume the same honourable distinction with his grandfather *Abraham* in being *the father of many nations*, or the great head and *father of the faithful* in every nation, to the end of time.‡ The like prophecy was delivered by *Isaiah*, which, rightly translated, runs thus; *nevertheless the dimness* [upon the church of the Jews] *shall not be to her as the anguish* [occasioned by God's judgements] *according to the first*

* Isa. lxvi, 3. † This possibly is the sense of that remarkable passage in *Haggai* ii. 11.—14.

‡ Gen. xxxv. 11. and xvii. 5.

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time, when he debased the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali [by sending the people of those provinces as captives into *Assyria*]* *but hereafter he shall glorify the way of the sea* [the coast of that country, typifying the nations of the Gentiles, which the sea often stands for, and prepare a way for them] *over Jordan* [alluding to the passage of the Israelites over the separating boundary, and meaning, that the partition shall cease] *even Galilee of the nations* [the despised heathen:] *the people walking in darkness have seen the great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined: thou hast multiplied the nation* [according to the promise, like the *sand*, or the *stars*:]† *which thou didst not bring up: the joy, with which they joy before thee, is like the joy in harvest* [for it is the gathering in of the spiritual sheaves, in the last dispensation or time] *and as* men *rejoice when they divide the spoil.*‡ Our Lord, to testify that this prophecy was about to be accomplished, literally fulfilled the sign, as in other cases; and began his ministry *upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Naphtalim.*§

These united people, Jew and Gentile believers, forming the one church, one body, one generation, are doubtless those, whom the Psalmist saw in spirit, when he breathed forth that heavenly prayer: *Remember me, O Lord, with the favour* [רצון free grace] *that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation: that I may*

* 2 Kings xv. 29.

† Gen. xxii. 17. ‡ Isa. ix. 1, 2, 3.

§ Matth. iv. 13, &c. See MEDE upon this subject, b. i. disc. 25. And also Dr. GILL upon the Prophecies, p. 147.

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see the good of thy CHOSEN; *that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy* NATION; *that I may glory with thine* INHERITANCE.* In this charming passage, is beautifully comprehended the substance of this essay. The *free grace* or *favour* of God induced the *choice*, which he made of his people: that choice, when carried into act, raised them to be his *nation*: that nation, thus chosen and governed, became his own *peculiar delight* and *inheritance*.

What a wonderful distinction is here bestowed upon *the called, and chosen, and faithful*? To what a super-eminent dignity are those children of men raised, who are made the children of God?

And is this thy portion, O Christian, thou son of earth by nature, yet redeemed from it? Is this thy calling, thou poor benighted Gentile, sitting in the shadow of death? If *David*, in the contemplation of these mercies, could say; *Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* what ought to be the feeling of thy soul, so *gathered from among the heathen* as thou art, and so wonderfully entitled to inherit the throne of glory?

O reflect, with adoration and comfort, that thou art *peculiarly* God's OWN; and therefore, in proof of it, that thou must be *holy*. *Be ye holy for I am holy*, saith the Lord. A sheep cannot be filthy as a swine, nor live upon its trash for food. Every real believer *hateth the garment which is spotted by the flesh*; for, being cleansed and clothed by Christ, he loves to be clean, both for his Redeemer's sake and for his own.

And remember too, when thy soul trembles under the violence of trial or temptation, that thou art so peculiarly

* Ps. cvi. 4, 5.

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God's own, as never to be another's, never to be lost. He will never leave nor forsake, what he hath loved so much, as to purchase at the dear rate of the death of his Son. *Fear thou not* [and this exhortation is repeated again and again] *for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea* [תמכתיך] *I will hold fast to support thee, with the right hand of my righteousness.** *Fear not; for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I* Jehovah *am thy* Alehim, *the* Holy One *of* Israel, *thy Saviour.*†

Christian, what greater promises than these canst thou desire? O be not faithless, but believing; and all shall be done according to this holy word. It is a shame to doubt the veracity of a good and upright man: it is something more to distrust the faithfulness of HIM, who is the truth itself, who cannot be deceived or disappointed, who is too full of compassion to deceive thee, and too full of power and providence to cease working by all means for thy welfare.

* Isa. xli. 10. † Isa. xliii. 1—3.

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FIRST-BORN.

THIS title is not always to be taken in the strict sense, implied in the English word; for the Hebrew בכר signifies not only *first-born*, but also the *chief*, *pre-eminent*, *most-excellent*, &c. There is another word ראשית, which more properly signifies the first *transmission* of a creature into the world. The *first-born* males, however; those literally such; had great privileges and consideration above the succeeding children, from the earliest ages. Under the patriarchal dispensation, though every man was a priest for himself and for his own house, and therefore offered up sacrifices to God (which under the *Jewish* dispensation was confined to one particular family or tribe;) yet, upon solemn occasions, where a whole lineage were assembled, it is with good reason believed, that he, who had the right of primogeniture, made the offerings upon the altar for all the rest. Thus *Jethro*, *Moses's* father-in-law, *took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God*, just before the Levitical institution, though *Moses* and *Aaron*, and all the elders of *Israel*, were present to communicate sacramentally with him.* The learned *Selden* has observed, that they were thus dignified particularly as the *servants* of God, in performing

* Exod. xviii. 12.

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his עבודה or *ministry*; and, in being eminently such, were considered as the *heads* of the people. Hence, in respect to their divine office, they were called by the title of כהן, which implies *prince* or *primate* as well as *priest*; and thus what is rendered *priest of On* (Gen. xli. 45.) and *priest of Midian* (Exod. ii. 16.) includes both the civil and religious notion of a *præ-eminent man*, or chief. In process of time, therefore, when great monarchical governments were established, the כהנים, *priests* or *princes*, were such persons as had liberty of nearest access to kings, and, from their weight and influence or for their wisdom, were admitted to be their counsellors and confidents.*

The *young men*† of the children of Israel, whom *Moses* sent to offer burnt-offerings and to sacrifice peace-offerings unto the Lord, are supposed to be the *first-born* or chiefs of families or tribes, to whom was yielded this solemn office of the primogeniture. This is the last act recorded of the patriarchal œconomy amongst the sons of *Israel*; for, soon afterwards, the *first-born* were *redeemed* from that duty by the substitution of the Levites in their *stead*, who from *thenceforth*,‡ in a peculiar manner, were the Lord's,§ and were to *bear sin* instead of the first-born, as representatives of the Messiah, till he should appear in the world.

From hence it seems, that there had been an antient claim of God to the *first-born*, as his own, or as the

* The Gentiles, long after the patriarchal times, had this reference to their chiefs, though much depraved, as every other religious institution was among them.

† Exod. xviii. 12. ‡ Numb. xviii. 22. § Numb. iii. 45, &c.

repre-

representative of the great first-born* who should come in the fulness of time (and hence probably *Eve's* mistake in Gen. iv. 1. concerning *Cain* her first-born; "I have gotten *a man*, or *person*, *the very Jehovah*.") which claim was renewed in Exod. iv. 22. and confined to a particular stock; *Israel is my son, even my first-born.*

Now, this claim of God could not arise from his right to the first-born as *Jehovah the Creator*, for, as such, he certainly has a right to *all*, and so it is expressly said in Exod. xix. 5. but as *Jehovah the Redeemer*, whose office it was, when united to the human nature, to be *the first-born among many brethren*, and, as such, being the first and nearest of kin, to redeem as their representative the inheritance lost to the family. And the first-born, being thus specially claimed, showed, that the inheritance had been forfeited; that he, who had the next *natural* right, was therefore cut off from it by being the Lord's; and that he, as well as the inheritance, must be redeemed by *another*, fully able and rightfully capable of performing such a redemption. It appears then, that the ground of the doctrine of the first-born is this. All men and all their posterity are naturally under the curse for sin. The first-born therefore was to be devoted to God, as his peculiar, for an acknowledgement of this truth, in the first instance; and, in the second, for the declaration of another truth, arising by God's mercy out of the former; namely, that God would appoint his first-born and only

* Hence, the selling the birth-right was so great a sin in *Esau*. He valued neither religion before God, nor good example to man; but preferred a small present enjoyment, the gratification of his belly, before both. See Gen. xxv. 34. Exod. xvi. 3. Phil. iii. 19.

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begotten, Christ, to be sacrificed and devoted to the curse, in commutation for all those, who by grace should claim this benefit. Thus *Abraham*, upon his acknowledging God's right and justice in the proposed sacrifice of his son, found deliverance by a substitute of the Lord's providing, and, cleaving in faith to the divine appointment, obtained the blessing.

This, by the way, proves, that *Jehovah*, who appeared to *Abraham*, to *Moses*, and to the fathers, was the second person in the divine essence, and who, when united to human flesh, became the long-expected Messiah or Christ.

The selection of *Israel* from all other nations to this distinction, was a typical lesson or example, that God chooses whom he wills, and that his elect are but a part redeemed, therefore called the *first-born* or most excellent and valuable to himself, out of all the world. Thus they are named, *the general assembly and church of the first-born, written, or enrolled, in heaven.** Their names were there inscribed *in the book of life from the foundation of the world.* They were Christ's own, *given to him by the Father*;† and for these, as being his own, he laid down his invaluable life.‡

This typical lesson was carried on through the whole of the Jewish dispensation, and particularly in the contest between the Lord and *Pharaoh*, and in all the consequences of that important history.

The first-born of *Egypt* were destroyed, in order to declare, that as no paschal lamb was slain for the *Egyp-*

* Heb. xii. 23. † John xvii. 2.
‡ John x. 14, 15.

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tions, so there was no *redemption* for them; nor is there, in the spiritual sense, for the hardened and unbelieving world, whom they represent. All expectation of that kind (no other substitute or sacrifice for sins remaining, upon their rejection of what God hath ordained) shall be entirely cut off. The paschal lamb was *limited* to *the family*, for which it was slain; and every one of that family was shut up or *confined* to the house till the morning: so Christ did not so much as *pray*, much less *die*, for any but those of *his* family; and *unto them that look for him*, more than for the morning watch, *shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.*

The *first-born* of Israel were saved from destruction, only by the blood of a *lamb slain*, sprinkled upon the lintels and door-posts* of their houses; that is, by a substitute, whose blood should answer for them in the hour of general vengeance. This lamb was to be *unblemished*, and *of the first year*, thereby representing the holy Lamb of God, who, in the divine purpose, was slain from before the foundation of the world; and who also was to stand as the great first-born, or priest, *bearing sin*, atoning

* Exod. xii. 22. The *lintel*, משקוף from שקף, to *see*, was either the upper beam which covered the door, or (as some suppose) a small window over it to afford light.—מזוזות, *side-posts*, from זוז, to *move*; the posts, on which the doors were hung, to move, or to which they were fastened.—The *former* of these may possibly, in a spiritual view, intend the *intellectual* faculty, or *spirit*, and the latter imply the animal *soul* and *body*, or that which outwardly *acts*. These must be sprinkled by the blood of the lamb, according to the apostle's prayer; *The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God, your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Thess. v. 23.

and

and making offerings for all his family. He, and he only, was capable of being both *priest* and *sacrifice* together. To keep this great and momentous truth in constant view, the first-born son was enjoined *to be given to the Lord.** God would not spare his only begotten Son for the sake of his people; and this claim upon the first-born of that preaching and prophetic people the Jews, was an apt memorial of his goodness. But as *their* first-born, being naturally sinful and defiled, differed from *his*, it could not be accepted in that condition, but must necessarily be *redeemed*. On the contrary, the first-born of *clean* animals were acceptable, and on being presented became typically חרם a *curse* or *devoted thing* to Jehovah, as a substitution for the *unclean* first-born of man. The first-born of *unclean* beasts were to be redeemed, or destroyed. All this preached that solemn truth, which man by nature is unwilling to learn; that he is considered, in his fallen state, *unclean* and *ignorant, as the beasts before God;* that he cannot be accepted in his own person, or in that natural state; that he must be redeemed by the blood or death of *a clean* substitute, shed or offered in his behalf; that this substitute can only be Christ, the *pure Lamb*, who *died for sin*, and became חרם a *curse*, devoted to divine justice, and thereby, as well as by his infinite merit brought in, so altered the condition of those for whose sins he died and became a *curse*, as to be for and amongst *them* the *head*† of a *new creation*, or *the first*

* Exod. xxii. 29.

† Jer. xxx. 21. with Gen. xlix. The *ass* is particularly mentioned as *unclean*.—Our Lord rode upon one, at the true proclamation of the great Hosanna, for a sign, not of his humility only,

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first-born of every creature; that man, thus redeemed, is rendered a spiritual first-born, or *new creature in Christ Jesus*, being sealed, changed, and new-born of the Spirit, and so in Christ become the spiritual *first-fruits of the creatures unto God;* and that all this comes to pass, in consequence of a reciprocal transfer of man's sin to the Redeemer and of his righteousness to the redeemed, and by the operation of the Holy Spirit, uniting, in that event, the Redeemer to the redeemed so intimately, as to be considered as ONE in the sight of the Father, and, as that one, to possess together the everlasting inheritance, once lost but now amply re-purchased, in the kingdom of glory.

The *chief things of the antient mountains*, or the great truths thus revealed of old, representing these *precious things of the lasting hills*,* are witnessed by all the scriptures, and are indeed a very considerable part of their subject and burden.

The *first-born males of cattle* appear also to have been devoted to God under the law, as *memorials* of this great redemption. The first-born of *clean* cattle (as was observed) were the Lord's, to be entirely dedicated to him

only, but of his humiliation. His church, for whom he came and to which he was united, was by nature like that poor and unclean animal on which he rode; and he was contented to present himself in conjunction with it before God, as the pure Lamb, appointed to be slain in its stead and so to redeem it. Herein was his *grace*, that though he was rich, yet for the sake of his redeemed he became poor (he emptied himself,) that they through his poverty might be made rich. Zech. ix. 9. 2 Cor. viii. 9.

* Deut. xxxiii. 15. That these were *spiritual* blessings, it is evident from the subsequent verse, where *earthly* things are mentioned in apposition.

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in sacrifice,* as repeated figures of the Saviour's dying atonement, and by no means or pretence to be exempted from the altar. Thus they showed, not only the Lord's death till he came, but the *absolute necessity* of his mediatorial sufferings, and the *antient purpose* of the Godhead to *prepare for him a body* for that vicarious sacrifice, and to *bruise* it with sorrows *greater than any man's* when prepared. So the first-born of *unclean* cattle† were to be redeemed by a *lamb*, or by five shekels presented to the divine service as an equivalent atonement, probably paid if a lamb could not so easily be procured; or else such first-born were to be destroyed. These first-born from the unclean denote *the redeemed from the earth*, who are *by nature children of wrath even as others*, but are saved by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, that paschal *Lamb* who was *sacrificed for them*, and by whom they *pass over* from death to life, and from satan to God. The first-born *only* were redeemed, not *all*; and this explains *whom* Christ redeemed and who to him are the all in all, and therefore called *the whole world*, or that which he considers as the whole to him in it. Isa. lxiii. 19. And it may be observed, that the price, and means, and extent, of redemption are every where specifically laid down in the law, with a specific application: a plain proof, among others, that the blood of Christ was also specifically determined, and not

*Lev. xxvii. 26.

† They were called *unclean*, because they represent certain moral vices or defects, which are odious in moral agents; for as to the beasts themselves (as *Maimonides* observes) they neither gave nor received pollution, when alive; but man only. *Porta Mosis*, p. 288.

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left to the uncertain will of man; but, in all its use and appropriation, was referred to the first-born of the true Israel, who, and who only, are *hallowed to the Lord.** These *pass under the rod* of the Lord, and are so *brought into the bond of* his *covenant*, as to be holy indeed unto him, and incapable of alienation from him. It was this, which made the psalmist's heart to dance for joy, when he sang; *Thy* ROD [not the instrument of chastisement, as some have imagined, but of eternal election and sure vocation] *and thy* STAFF, [the support of grace, ensuring that election] *they comfort me.*†

The *first fruits* of the soil were also an appointed acknowledgement of this great redemption. All things were lost to man by the fall, except thistles and thorns.

* Numb. iii. 13. 47. Exod. xlii. 13. That the price of redemption was *peculiarly* paid for the first born, appears clearly both from the law (Numb. iii. 45, &c.) and from this circumstance, that, if the first-born *died* within the month or thirty days, from which time (as the Jewish doctors tell us) the redemption was held to be due, or died even on the thirtieth day, the sum enjoined by the law was not to be paid, or, if it had been previously advanced, was to be returned. MAIM. *apud* CONST. L. EMPEREUR *de leg. Hebr. forens.* p. 163. The redemption *by silver and gold* was not to be paid for any but a *living* first-born, and therefore not to be paid *in vain*; nor is the thing signified by this typical law, the far more precious redemption of souls by Jesus Christ, made without a specific determination of characterized persons. It is a positive and *purchased possession* only, which is the object of the Redeemer's claim, and from thence described as his own *field* bounded, his own *garden* inclosed, his own *vineyard* fenced; not a wild unappropriated *common* or *waste*, which, as such, must remain open and uncultivated, and consequently barren or uncertainly productive.

† Ps. xxiii. 4. comp. with Lev. xxvii. 32. Jer. xxxiii. 13. Ezek. xx. 37.

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The children of Israel, therefore, representing the redeemed, were enjoined in Lev. xxiii. and other places, to confess, in the action of presenting the first fruits, *of* and *from* WHOM they held all their temporal support, the original gift of which had been forfeited* by transgression; and also to own, that only, by the devoting of these, which were the emblem of their Redeemer and his salvation, both they and their natural enjoyments could be sanctified. *The first-fruit being holy, the lump also was holy.* Thus Christ, the first-fruits, having sanctified himself, sanctified also them that are his.† He offered himself without spot unto God; and he will, from age to age, present the increase of his church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, so that they also shall be acceptable through him.

In order to enforce this the more strongly, an *unblemished lamb*, with the *first sheaf* of the harvest was to be offered: and the *mincha* of this lamb (translated *meat-offering*, but it was a composition made of the corn, beat out of this sheaf, and offered with the lamb) was to be a fire-offering to Jehovah for a *savour of rest.* This denoted Christ, with his blood shed and his righteousness fuming before the Lord, presenting himself as the first-fruits of the great spiritual harvest, which thus was consecrated by him. And with this righteousness, and with his people upon account of it, Jehovah is well-pleased.‡

The same thing, nearly, was to be done, with still greater solemnity, on the fiftieth day afterwards;§ by

* Gen. i. 29. and iii. 17.
† John xvii. 19.
‡ Isa. xlii. 21.
§ Lev. xxiii. 15.

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which, from all the circumstances which cannot here be enlarged upon, there seems intended the emblematic *consummation* of all preceding times, and the final completion of the whole work of consecration by Christ for his redeemed before God.

The *first-fruits*, as they primarily related, in their spiritual sense, to the person of Christ, do also relate subordinately to the first-fruits of the Spirit in his people, which are *by Christ, to the glory of the Father.* They were therefore offered up, by the antient believers, as pledges of faith and thanksgiving, and in testimony, that they held all temporal blessings and all spiritual mercies, with the increase of them, on the ground of God's covenant of redemption. This sweetened every outward favor, and at the same time doubled every gracious joy. It was this which put more gladness into the psalmist's heart, than other men of a different spirit could obtain, when their corn and their wine and their oil increased.

And if thou art one of God's *first born* or *first-fruits*, O reader, thou also wilt rejoice in thy privilege and portion with a more emphatic joy, than can be derived from all the honors and riches of this dying world. Thy meditation on thy Redeemer and his love will be frequent and sweet. The memorials of his mercy to thy soul, recorded in his word, will be subjects of thy constant perusal. Of this book thou wilt join with some *German* reformers to say, *En paradisus noster!* "Behold our paradise!" Thou wilt not need tokens on thine hand, or frontlets between thine eyes, or a sacrificed lamb, or a rescued first-born animal, or the first-fruits of the harvest, or any other outward thing prescribed to the Jews,

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Jews, for remembrances: but *the word being nigh thee and in thine heart*, and *the Spirit of truth abiding in thee*, will afford the richest pledges of thy Saviour's goodness, and cause thee to rest, with lively faith, upon that covenanted mercy of the Most High which endureth for ever. Though thou art not of the seed of *Abraham* according to the flesh, yet having the faith of *Abraham*, thou wilt find an interest in that blessed promise; *The people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou*, O Lord, *hast multiplied the nation, which thou didst not bring up: the joy, with which these joy before thee, is according to the joy of harvest*, when thy people are brought as the first-fruits with melody before thee,* or *as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.—For unto us*, us Gentiles rejoicing with the Jews thine antient people, *a child is born, unto us a son is given*, &c. †

Having then this blessed hope, how much doth it behove thee to devote the *first* and *best* of thy time, thy talents, and thy heart, to the service and honor of God thy Saviour! It must be thy delight to do this: it will be thy regret, when thou failest, or when it is otherwise. Whom we love, we desire to please, and shall think no endeavours to please a burden. A grateful spirit is ever upon the the watch to show its gratitude. Thus, one of Christ's *first-born* and *free-born*, will rejoice to testify his Redeemer's praise in every act of duty and affection, not thinking much of any thing, but rather grieving that all

* Isa. xxx. 29. † Isa. ix. 2—6.

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is too little and too low. Remembering what he *was*, a *Syrian ready to perish*, and what, through infinite grace, he now *is*, one of the first-fruits to God and the Lamb, and an inheritor of eternal glory; he is ashamed at the meanness of his own and of all human services, and longs for a more enlarged capacity both of mind and power to show forth his Master's excellent worth. The hope of this makes heaven itself, among other things, supremely desirable. There the Lord Redeemer shall be praised better and more; but, even there, not enough. Finite abilities, and such only are in the highest creatures, can never scan or celebrate infinite attributes to perfection. But what they are able to do, they do to the utmost, and with rapture.—Dear reader, pray for grace to imitate them, and to begin that delightful business, which shall employ both them and thee, beyond the molestation of infirmity or of evil, for ever and ever.

LEVITES.

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LEVITES.

ISRAEL *is my son, even my first-born,* saith the Lord.* He was chosen and adopted from among the nations of the world to bear this character and to enjoy its privileges. † And great were those privileges and high this character, though primarily of a temporal and figurative kind. But to declare together with other important truths, to the faithful among them and among us, that *all were not* even then *of Israel, who were called Israel;* God ordained that *all the first-born* only of these outwardly favoured people, should be *sanctified to himself,* as *his own.* ‡ These, or the substitutes which redeemed them, and the first-born of their clean cattle, or the redemption of the first-born of their unclean cattle, and the first-fruits of their land, were so peculiarly the Lord's as to be incapable of any other application. If, again, any thing were *devoted* to the Lord, its designation could not be changed: it became unalterably his. The word put upon this *most holy thing,* as it is called, is חרם [LXX, ἀνάθημα] which implies a person or thing so separated or mortified, as to insure or draw the ban of divine vengeance upon him, who should presume to break in upon it.§

* Exod. iv. 22.
† Deut. vii. 6. &c.
‡ Exod. xiii. 2
§ Lev. xxvii. 28.

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But, in order still farther to show, that the privileges of grace and redemption come, not by right of nature or by right of birth, but by God's own selection; a certain set of men were chosen and appointed,* instead of the first-born, to be the Lord's, to be *joined* to his High-Priest, to attend upon his service, and to keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation. These were the *Levites;* and they received their name, as well as their progenitor, † from the intention of their being *joined* to the Lord and to each other *in love and unity,* for one divine service and calling.

These Levites, being thus representatives of the Jewish first-born of God throughout the world, were henceforth neither considered nor numbered as men of the earth, for they had no particular region allotted to them, but as a *scattered* race (such as God's true first-born, whom they represented, ever have been) among other tribes and people. They were *given,* figuratively, to Christ *out of the world* (John xvii. 6.); as his true redeemed are. The *Urim* and *Thummim* were with the *head* of their brotherhood and among them only. They were the fewest in number of any of the tribes, as *Israel* in general was of the surrounding nations. They were not, in the cause of God, to know any man, not the nearest and dearest, after the flesh, as we may read in Exod. xxxii, 26. Deut. xxxiii. 9. Their charge was the outward services of the tabernacle and temple; and this occupied the prime of

* Deut. xxi. 5. Numb. iii. 12. Redemption and substitution, in types, were the ground-work of the law; as redemption and substitution, in truth and reality, are the foundation of the gospel.

† Gen. xxix. 34.

their

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their life, from twenty-five to fifty. "Age or time only disqualified them from service; not corporal defects or infirmities; whereas bodily defects alone disqualified priests; but not age or time."*

A lively picture this of God's spiritual Levites, or first-born, who are God's *favoured ones* in Christ, and are therefore styled חסידים, *graciously dear*, and *through his own benignity precious*. The light and knowledge of God is with them in the person of Christ. They are few indeed compared with the world at large; and yet, few as they are, to them the kingdom is given. Luke xii. 32. They are to judge of persons and things not according to the flesh; but to live and act for God in the world. They are seen to be his servants by their conversation and conduct. Their service, however, is but for a *time*: when the jubilee of their days arrives upon earth, that is, when the space appointed them below is accomplished, all their labours cease in the flesh; and they enter upon a more exalted station. In a word, they are Levites in this world, with respect to their powers of action; but priests unto God, by faith now for another world, and hereafter perfectly in that other. The *infirmities* of their bodies do not prevent their present office and duty, but only the present time: soon, they shall be holy and immaculate priests, beyond all limitation of infirmity or age.

By faith only are they the Lord's priests, as well as kings, below; and so by faith only they can enter while here into *the secret place of the Most High*, and commune with him within his tabernacle or ordinances: but,

* Abarb. *apud.* Outr. *de sacr.* lib. i. c. 7.

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in a little period, they shall follow their great Leader into the holiest of all, and see *eye to eye* concerning those things and beings, which their highest thoughts cannot so much as apprehend or aspire to, while the veil of flesh is upon them and obstructs the clear view of their final destination.

It is to be, however, remarked, that both *Levites* and *priests* were of the same *devoted* tribe, and stood for the Lord's *own peculiar treasure*, his dear and inseparable *first-born*. The distinction only served for the time, in order to explain, that, as there was a difference of degree among men of the same flesh and blood in their approaches to God, so there is a further exaltation of state for the redeemed. In the kingdom above, there is no inferiority of *Levites*; but all are *kings and priests unto God and the Father*; all are *joined* by one Spirit to their Lord; all are united by the same Spirit, in an indissoluble bond, to each other.*

The Lord's *spiritual Levites* are not taken from one tribe of men only, or one nation, but (as it is represented in the Revelation) are chosen out of every tribe and every nation, and irreversibly *sealed*.† They are *re-*

* As the Levites were attached, in subordination, to the priests, by the law of *Moses*; so the *Nethinims* were those *Gibeonites* and their descendants, who served under the Levites, and were stationed as "hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of God." Correspondent with these, in another œconomy, are those who are given to the service of God, and labour in his great vocation, either by defending the out-works of religion, or by ministering to those who are brought into it, while they themselves are not the Lord's *freed men*, and really enjoy not those precious things to which they serve. See Josh. ix. 23.

† Rev. vii. 5. &c.

deemed

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*deemed to God by the blood of the Lamb, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people,** composing altogether a *multitude, which no man could number.* But God can and doth reckon every one, for he *telleth the number of these stars, and calleth them all by their names. The book of life* records them every one; and there they *have been written from the foundation of the world.*

The name, then, and character of true believers are well expressed by *Levites,* because they are *united* as one stock to each other, and to their chief or *Lord. They are joined to the Lord, and are one spirit* † with him. Like the bride to her husband, or the members to their head, they are one with Christ, and Christ with them; God dwelleth in them, and they in God; they are all one in Christ, as the Father and Christ are one; and they shall partake of all the glories, which the human nature of their Redeemer partakes, and for which it was begotten into the world to procure. Like the precious stones in the breast-plate, they receive Christ the true light inwardly, and reflect him outwardly, to his glory. They in Christ, and Christ in them, are brought into an unutterable union and communion with the glorious Godhead or Jehovah, and shall possess all the bliss and dignity of that exalted state for ever.

The service of the Levites was also called a *warfare;* and they themselves prefigured all the faithful *soldiers* of Christ Jesus. Thus the apostle; *I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course.* He alludes to the spiritual service of the true Levites and Priests, which it was his privilege to perform, under the idea of the cere-

* Rev. v. 9. † 1 Cor. vi. 17.

monial

monial service of the legal Levites and Priests, which as a Benjamite, he could not perform.*

How do all the pomp and pride of man shrink into contemptible meanness before the very thought of this immortal grandeur! The glory of princes, consisting of empty sounding names, or of a little gaudy splendor administered by dying worms like themselves, or of a multitude of idle ceremonies and perishing cares, or of distracting attentions to circumstances foreign to their own welfare, which consume their time and prey upon their spirits and their health, or of an affectation of vast importance, which they strive to feel and to have felt by others, without the acquisition of inward peace and substantial good; all this glory of the most dignified worms, alas! what is it now, but a fleetly passing imagination; and where will it shortly be, when Christ, the Lord of life shall appear, and his Christians shall appear with him in his glory! What a different estimate of things do grace and eternity teach men! and what beggary and folly will all that be found, which mortals now fondly

* Thus it was said of some priests under the law, that they were *very able men for the work of the service of the house of God.* There גבורי חיל *strong in might,* (1 Chron. ix. 13.) or strength for war, is the natural image for strength of grace in the spiritual warfare. The church was ever considered here as *militant,* and therefore called in v. 19. *the* HOST *of* Jehovah. The priests and Levites ranked as the principal officers, under the law: as the apostles and ministers of the word stand foremost under the gospel. But all the host must *fight the good fight of faith,* and *war the good warfare.* 1 Tim. i. 18. Exod. xviii. 21. Judg. vi. 12.

pursue

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pursue, as the summit and perfection of grandeur and happiness!

O my soul, seek thou the unfading honors and the durable riches of righteousness. Soon will all other things be but of very little importance, either in themselves or to thee. The clouds and shadows of time are swiftly flying; and the day-spring from on high will e'er long revisit the world with transcendent lustre. Well for thee, if thou canst hail his appearing, or canst join the apostle in the seraphic energy of his language and faith; *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

And what is life below, without faith in this Jesus! And where is faith, but in union with him! And how can this union *be* obtained, but by his Spirit descending to the soul! And how doth this Spirit produce this union, but according to the divine will carried forth into the exercise of the divine power! And how is this power manifested, but, as the effect of this union, by working in the soul both to *will and to do*, according to the divine nature, to which it is united! And what is the *willing* and *doing* of God, but the *sanctification* of his children, *making them meet for their inheritance*, and conducting them in a gracious manner towards it!—O may these things be in me, and abound, to the glory of my God and Redeemer!

Thus may I prove myself a *Levite* indeed, and evince my *junction to the Lord*, by having the fruits of his Spirit in my heart and life. From a Levite below, he will, I humbly trust, in due time, raise me up to the full possession of his royal priest-hood above. The way and the means are all in his hand. There I leave them, not

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not desiring to know beforehand the *mode* of his action, or the *time* of his ordination. Both are best and safest in his own power. The *end* is sure; because his covenant and promise have made it so; and, for this, I may confidently wait and assuredly trust. He will keep safely more than I am able, or know how, to commit unto him. He will give *me*, though *the son of a stranger* by nature, because now *joined to himself* through his mercy, *an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off*; and will *bring me to his holy mountain, and make me joyful in his house of prayer.**

* Isa. lvi. 3—7.

LIVELY

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LIVELY, OR PRECIOUS STONES.

EVERY thing, enjoined by the law of Moses, was a type or *shadow of good things*, either at the time spiritually existing, or more amply to be revealed or fulfilled in the time to come. Among other articles of that divine œconomy, the breast-plate of the high-priest was one of striking consideration. It is translated, *the breast-plate of judgement;* but probably, with more propriety, it might have been rendered, the *breast-plate of the decree;* the decree of the Lord himself, concerning the things signified by it.

The form of this remarkable breast-plate was exactly *square*, and contained within it four rows of the most precious stones, three of which were in each row. Of what kinds these several stones precisely were, the most learned among the Jews or Christians are not entirely agreed. They are, however, uniformly of opinion, that the stones were of the most beautiful, costly, and resplendent species, and therefore the most proper to convey the idea for which they were chosen.

As it may not be unpleasant to some readers, I have endeavoured to collect the best opinion upon the names of the several stones, and their disposition in the breast-plate, together with their respective colours; in which last particular, I have been materially assisted by a valuable friend, who is particularly intelligent in this branch of natural history; and who piously observes upon the subject, " that as it hath pleased God, out of the four elements, to create such glorious, though inanimate, productions as these precious stones, which demon-

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strate beauty, light, perfection, excellency, choice, durability, &c. so we may learn, that it is truly in his power to do much greater wonders in our bodies and souls (in our *whole man*, as St. Paul speaks) *at that day when he will make up his jewels.*" Perhaps, the annexed order and description, may come near the truth of the original designation.

לוי LEVI ברקת Carbuncle. *red as a coal of fire.* Transparent.	שמעון SIMEON. פטדה Topaz. *a rich golden yellow.* Transparent.	ראובן REUBEN. אדם Sardius. *a most luminous red.* Transparent.
זבולן ZEBULON. יהלום Diamond. *white as dew drops.* Transparent.	יששכר ISSACHAR. ספיר Sapphire. *azure blue as the sky.* Transparent.	יהודה JUDAH. נפך Emerald. *beautiful green as grass.* Transparent.
גד G A D. אחלמח Amethyst. *a violet color sparkling.* Transparent.	נפתלי NAPHTALI. שבו Agate. *a light brown.* Nearly Transparent.	דן D A N. לשם Ligure. *light green as the sea.* Transparent.
בנימן BENJAMIN. ישפה Jasper. *deep green.* Half Transparent.	יוסף JOSEPH. שהם Onyx. *beautiful white.* Half Transparent.	אשר ASHER. תרשיש Beryl. *rich red as a glowing fire* Half Transparent.

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The reader will observe, that the breast-plate was in a manner covered with the precious stones, set in gold, to the perfect number of TWELVE. There was to be *a fulness of stone;* none to be wanting; none redundant: the absolute specification of number and place rendered all defects and irregularities impracticable.

They were enjoined to be *stones of memorial* or *record* for Israel before Jehovah; and the names of the twelve tribes were therefore deeply engraven, each stone for a tribe, upon them. The high-priest always carried this plate upon his breast, fastened as prescribed in Exod. xxviii. in the ministration of his office within the sanctuary.

But the great glory of the breast-plate under the law was the URIM and THUMMIM, literally *lights* and *perfections*, both as to signification and use. Omitting the several opinions which have arisen upon this subject, the USE appears evidently to have been spiritual, under the immediate direction of God. It was the sacred *oracle* of the Most High, which gave answers and instructions, according to the prayers of his people through a Mediator. The materials and construction of the breast-plate, being all of earthly substances, could never accomplish by any supposed inherent principle, (like the talismans of old) a purpose so prophetic and sublime. I have no difficulty in believing, that it was the HOLY SPIRIT alone, who gave forth responses, either by the *Bath Kol*, or gentle voice, as some suppose; or, as others conceive, by some particular manifestation of light upon the letters of the stones; or perhaps some

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gracious irradiation upon the mind of the high-priest, who carried them upon his bosom before the Lord.*

In a lower sense also, these precious stones were named *Urim* and *Thummim;* because intended to SIGNIFY God's chosen people. True believers are *lights in the Lord;* and they are also *perfections* in him, considered

* Under the second temple, this oracular communication was wholly discontinued; for though the Jews made a breast-plate of the nearest resemblance possible to the former one, which was, with the ark and other sacred utensils, taken or destroyed at the captivity; yet no answer was given, or pretended to be given, by its means. This may fairly be construed into a proof, that the true Urim and Thummim were purely spiritual, and that nothing analogous to *matter*, as some have supposed, was contained within the breast-plate, which could be consulted for directions. In like manner, the *Shecinah*, or holy presence of Jehovah, *dwelt* or *inhabited* (not *sate between*, as it is rendered) the *Cherubim* over the ark of the covenant. The intention of both types evidently was to declare, that, through the great High-Priest of our profession, we are to receive the *Spirit of truth* to guide us, and that by him also we are privileged to have finally an access to Jehovah in *the holiest of all.*

It may here be also observed, that a surreptitious book, entitled *Urim and Thummim*, was published in a former century by a Jew at Amsterdam, for the attention, probably, of his own people, but pretended to have been written during the time of the second temple, in order to supply the place of the oracle by the Urim and Thummim, lost at the destruction of the first temple, with other sacred utensils. According to WOLFIUS, (*Biblioth. Hebr.* vol. iv. 1089.) it is a poor and stupid attempt to divine by a cabalistical arrangement of the first letters of the names, engraved upon the twelve stones of the primitive breast-plate; and it is only noticed here to observe, that, when men are judicially left of God, as the Jews now are, they are capable of adopting the greatest absurdities for truth, and of turning what was intended for spiritual welfare and instruction into the grossest perversions.

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in their *number*, *beauty*, *lustre*, or *arrangement*. The *Holy Oracle*, the DIVINE SPIRIT, is with them and in them. To these, through their union with Christ the Mediator, he gives forth answers of peace when they ask in prayer, making his own word to become the true *Bath Kol*, and real voice; not of sound, but by the holy *illumination* of their understandings in the use of it, that they may know the things of God, which that word records. Among these, therefore, he may be said to reside; and to these only he gives forth his truth with grace and power, the effect of which is felt in their hearts, and seen in their lives.

The high-priest also carried upon his shoulders the names, equally divided, of the twelve tribes of Israel, engraved upon two other precious stones.—This was to show, that as the people of Christ, the true High-Priest, were near his heart, signified by the names upon the breast-plate; so their government, burden, &c. denoted by the other, rested upon his shoulders, who is as *mighty to save*, as he is *merciful to redeem*.

The spiritual idea, therefore, of the whole appears to be this; that the stones signify the people of God; that they are *elect* and *precious*; that they come forth and stand according to his appointment of place and order; that the Holy Spirit is with them and among them, from age to age, teaching and directing them into all truth by his word and ordinances; that they are borne upon the heart and shoulders of the true High-Priest Christ Jesus before the throne of God; loved with an everlasting love, and supported by a perpetual care; that they reflect the glorious rays of him their Sun of Righteous-

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ness; and that finally they shall be with him in his holy sanctuary for ever and ever.

This leads us further to consider, in a few words, the fitness of the type to the anti-type; or agreement of the figurative representation, by natural things, with the spiritual things or purposes intended by them.

Truly precious stones are generally pellucid or transparent, and readily admit the rays of light, as they are poured forth from the sun, without which they do not and cannot exhibit their beauty. So *the stones of God's sanctuary*, (Lam. iv. 1.) all real believers, are sincere in their spirits, more or less clear in the knowledge and enjoyment of the truth, proportionally to their respective measures of faith, and borrow all their splendor from the SUN *of Righteousness*, who has *risen upon them with healing in his beams*. They have no light of their own, and can only display a truly vivid and beautiful lustre, as they are irradiated by him. The more they have of this glory from Christ, the more luminous are they in their minds, the more lively in their affections, and with a warmer glow return his own rays in life and activity.

The stones, carried by the high-priest, were numbered and exact. There were no odd stones; not one unpolished, or unnamed. So *the living stones*, which these prefigure, are all *chosen of God and precious*, each one fitted to his place in the beauty of holiness, without any vacancy, defect, or contingency.—Add to this; the stones upon the breast-plate were all set in gold; and so are God's jewels *established in righteousness*, which gold is used to denote in the scriptures.

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The stones upon the breast-plate, though all precious, were of different colours, with some gradations of worth and excellency. The least transparent were placed upon the lowest range. Colours, it is well known, are not inherent in any earthly substances, but are formed by the refraction of the various rays of the sun, and exhibit diversely the several beams of its varied, yet undivided, light. The distinctions also of the several colours upon the breast-plate, heightened the beauty of the whole.—The same variety holds good in *the stones, which God hath laid in Zion with fair colours.* (Isa. liv. 11.) Believers are all precious in his sight; but they have, more or less among themselves, a variety of distinct graces, with considerable degrees of difference. Though they all agree in refracting light from Christ; yet they do not all refract the same rays, nor the same proportion of light and beauty. Some are, in certain degrees, obscured with error, or with so much grossness as to render them less vivid or transparent; but they still retain such a measure of light and grace as to distinguish them from those impervious masses of stone, which stand for the rest of the world. In all these *diversities*, however, there is this unity, that *it is the same God, who*, in every proportion of good, *worketh all in all.* Thus says the apostle: *To one is given* the *word of wisdom;* to another, of *knowledge;* to another, *faith;* to another, *discerning of spirits;* &c. but these and all other excellencies are wrought by one and the same power; to the whole and to every member of the church it is *grace given*, and not by any means a virtue distinct from divine impression, or inherent in themselves. They can show no

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lustre of love, zeal, or duty, without Christ *the light of life*; more than a stone in the breast-plate could display any irradiation without the sun. They may also differ in the degrees of splendor and usefulness; but the difference in all *excellent gifts* (as the apostle styles them) is wholly from God, and allotted to every one according to his own superior wisdom and design. They are all mere stones in themselves. He selects and gathers them: he polishes and fixes them in their place and order: he shines upon them; and then they are enabled to shine too and show forth his glory, not their own. To shine at all, they must first be in Christ; and the more they are afterwards in his rays, the more of his grace and glory will rest upon them, and be reflected by them before the eyes of men. Without him, they are eclipsed and suffer offuscation, and would soon become as dark or dim as the rest of the world.

The precious stones of earth are also valued because of their firmness and durability.—So are the *pleasant stones* (as the prophet calls them) of God's sanctuary. They shall abide with rich display in his most holy place for ever and ever, beyond all the possibilities of diminution or decay; because their PRESERVER, who bears them upon his bosom and his shoulders, is equally faithful and almighty.*

* I am inclined to believe, that, as the Urim and Thummim related to the elect in Christ, and received that very name because of their union with him; so he hath styled himself the FIRST and the LAST, the *beginning* and the *end*, they being nothing in the kingdom of grace without him. To express this idea, he uses the first and the last letter of the Greek alphabet in the book of Revelation, the Α and the Ω: he is also the א and the ת of the אורים and the תומים, the *beginning* and the *ending* of the sign, which

But, there are also false stones; compositions, which look like the most precious of stones, while they are nothing but paste or glass. The skilful lapidary can readily detect them; though they often impose, and especially at a distance, upon the unexperienced or incautious observers.—Thus, lamentable it is to own, there are many deceivers, many hypocrites, many who *make a fair show in the flesh*, and yet, while they *seem to be something*, are really *nothing*, or worse than nothing;—mere paste, that soon dissolves in a fiery trial; worthless glass, that falls to pieces, if but struck with a blow of strong temptation.

This holds forth a solemn lesson for professors to search and try themselves. False stones may receive light, but they have no true weight or solidity in them; no genuine lustre, but only a specious or deceitful glare, contrived by the trick or art of man. When they are duly examined, their value is sooner or later ascertained; and they are finally thrown aside, as matters of imposition always deserve.—The allusion is too plain to need a further observation.

Christian! May you and I, through the Spirit of grace, apply all these things to ourselves for the closest examination; and may it be said at last to each of us, as to the spiritual church to whom every real believer belongs; *Arise, shine, for thy* LIGHT *is come, and the* GLORY *of the Lord is risen upon thee!*

which denotes his people. He is the first principle of their light, or light of their lights; and he is the consummation or perfection of the whole covenant of grace, and of those perfections also, which they have received, *in number, weight and measure*, only and entirely from him.

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PORTION, OR HERITAGE.

JEHOVAH'S *portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.* Deut. xxxii. 9.

The word rendered *portion* implies *part* or *division;* and, applied to the people of God, it denotes, that they are divided from the earth to be the Lord's particular and appropriated share, in distinction from all others. *Jacob* is a name given them as a name of character and unity. The word, rendered *lot,* means *line* or *cord* used in the apportionment or mensuration of land: thus, *the lines* (says the psalmist) *are fallen unto me in pleasant places,* &c. Ps. xvi. 6. These *lines,* forming a portion for a tribe or family, fell according to what is meant by another word, translated *lot* [גורל] and thus the portion of God's people was ever by his particular designation; for though their *lot,* which shall determine their *portion,* may *be cast into the lap* with others, yet *the whole disposal* or arrangement *of it is of the* LORD. Thus the word *cord* or *line* is used to specify the particular and precise boundary which he has fixed, immoveably fixed, as a perpetual land-mark, betwixt them and others. The word *inheritance* means, what comes of rightful claim and property. The Lord hath a right to his people by a very dear purchase; insomuch that they are now no longer *their own,* but his, and his for ever.

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This is also the import of the word *clergy*; i. e. *persons allotted*. And though, in a certain sense, it is rightfully peculiar to men, who are set apart from the world, to minister in holy things; yet, in a more sublime and spiritual view, it belongs collectively to the whole body of the redeemed, and points out their fixed and unalterable relation to Jehovah their Saviour. Thus, they are all *priests* to God and the Father, *holy*, *sanctified*, and the like: and thus, particularly, they are named God's *heritage*, ὁι κληροι, *the clergy*, as the word means, in 1 Pet. v. 3.

There are many passages of scripture, which point out God's people as his *portion* and *heritage*, and their extreme preciousness to him as such, which indeed is the true reason of the names. The Lord doth not use terms without an express or forcible sense, as men may and often do; but he determines a truth into fact by one word or title, and out of that, as from a root, he causes to spring forth or branch a thousand other dependant truths and principles, which, bearing rich and delightful fruit, are for the nourishment and comfort of his people.

They were an inheritance lost, but are now an inheritance redeemed and recovered by him, who is their *next of kin*, their elder *brother*, the *head over all things to them*, and therefore called, by one word, their גאל, which signifies both their *near Kinsman* and *Redeemer*. To him the psalmist addresses the fifth psalm, under the title of *the conqueror*, *the God of the inheritance*, i. e. the *church*: and it is thus addressed, that the church may joyfully remember, to whom she is privileged to apply

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apply for help at all times. Hence, the church is called *the rod* שבט *of his inheritance*; Jer. x. 16. because JEHOVAH in Christ is the covenanted head of the church, using his power and majesty eminently for her salvation and security. All she has and is belongs to the Lord, as his own peculiar estate; and it is represented under this idea, that his people individually may see their blessedness, and possess *everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace.*

The recovery of all inheritances at the year of *jubilee** was intended to signify, that the divine apportionment, which God hath in his people and they have in him, is unalienable under all circumstances of distress, which may prevent their temporary view or enjoyment of that privilege. When the great jubilee shall come and the last trumpet shall sound; all that the believer had a claim to by faith in this world, shall be made his own perfect and perpetual possession in the heavenly kingdom.

It

* When *Ahab* coveted the vineyard of *Naboth*, he attempted to violate this fundamental tenure of all the Jewish lands, which were held under God expressly, as the peculiar Lord of that soil, and the portions of which could not be alienated from the families to which they were *allotted*. It was this act of unbelief in God, as well as covetousness, which *Naboth*, who appears, upon the whole matter, to have been a true believer among idolaters, so highly abhorred as to say, *The Lord forbid it me*, or (as it might be rendered) *it would be a profanation to me before the Lord*, to *give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.* 1 Kings xxi. 3. If the lands were held like those of the Gentiles, there would have been no criminality in the absolute alienation, which *Ahab* appeared to desire.

One melancholy circumstance is obvious from the short history of this affair; which is, that the idolatrous and wicked reign of *Ahab*

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It is very probable, that the precept in the law, forbidding the removal of a *neighbour's land-mark, marked out by the antients*, with the curse attending the violation of it, has a further and more important sense than that of the mere letter, as well as the other injunctions revealed to *Moses*. If the man be accursed, who removes the boundary of estates among men; what shall become of him, who strives to displace the Lord's land-mark; or, in other words, to unfix eternal truths, to disguise them by sophistry or false principles, or to remove the confidence of his people's faith relative to their places and privileges in the great inheritance?

If then I am Jehovah's portion and his peculiar heritage, as he is graciously pleased to call me and to make me (the believer may say,) I am safe in his protection, and can never be lost. I may plead this title before him, for he has named me by it. And he can neither lie, nor change. The world may and shall be dissolved; but he himself assures me, that *his word shall not pass away*. In his faithfulness is all my security. Here I ground my hope; and I know, from the instruction of his word and by the experience of his grace, that it is a *good hope*, which will never make me ashamed, but bring me to that blessed and happy end for which I am waiting.

Ahab and *Jezebel* had so corrupted the country, that the *Elders* and *Nobles*, presiding over a city, were become the willing and wicked tools of an abandoned and bloody woman, and both hired people to be perjured, and acted themselves as parties in taking away the life of a good and innocent man. What a complication of sin was here! Covetousness, falshood, perjury, subornation, judgement deliberately false, and execution knowingly murderous, all carried on with pretended zeal for religion and loyalty!

O what

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O what a comfort is this in all my adversities, and sickness, and sorrow! The Lord, even my Lord, gave it forth for that purpose; so that, throughout my weary pilgrimage, in him I might have peace, and be sure of that refreshment to my spirit, which from its native weakness and continual warfare it cannot but need. And this support turns to me for a testimony, that as I am the Lord's portion and inheritance, so he is mine. O wonderful mercy, that *Jehovah* of Hosts, whom all creatures serve, and to whom the universe of nature belongs, should be mine, should call himself mine, should make me feel the heavenly truth, should open to me the greatness of the privilege, and make me taste the sweetness of the bounty! He is also *my portion* FOR EVER! Ps. lxxiii. 26. The eternity of the gift consummates the blessing. *There is none like unto the* God of Jeshurun, *who whirleth the heavens for thy help, and for his own majesty the powers of the sky. The eternal* God *is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, destroy.—Happy art thou,* O Israel: *who is like unto thee, O people saved by Jehovah, the shield of thy help, and the sword of thy excellency!*

FAITHFUL

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FAITHFUL.

THIS name, applied to believers in the scriptures, doth not so much point out that faithfulness or fidelity which arises from the integrity of their minds, as that faith or dependence upon God, which, first and above all things, distinguishes them from other men. They are, it is true, and must be, persons of principle and uprightness; but this in them is an effect of their faith, and by no means either faith itself, or the cause of it.

Faith relates to *truth*, and, in the holy tongue, is by some held to be of the same root: certainly, it hath a very near affinity to it. The Lord places his *truth* for a *foundation*, and then he impowers his people to *understand* and to *rest* upon it by faith or believing.* Or, if

* To the same purpose is the word επιγνωμων used by St. James iii. 13. which is rendered *endued with knowledge*. As true faith proceeds from *an understanding which is true*, and with it is the *gift* of the Holy Spirit; so it *stands* or *rests* upon the truth of God, which is its only proper foundation. Hence επιγνωμι, *science* (according to the philologers) has its name from bringing us (επι γασιν) to a *stop* or *resting-place*, founded upon the *reality* and *certainty* of the things known. See an ingenious etymology of this word, and of the words *scientia* and *understanding*, in HARRIS's *Hermes*, p. 369, 2d. edit. The word επιγνωμων, in the above text of St. James, implies, one possessing the knowledge of the truth, and, from thorough experience of its power and reality stedfastly by faith *resting* and *grounding* himself upon it. *Hesychius* renders πληροφορια, by which term the apostle means *the full gale*, or *assurance*, *of faith*, by βεβαιοτης, *firmness*, or *stability*. HESYCH. *apud* WITS. *in symb.* p. 28.

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we take the word to signify, *to carry, to bear in arms,* as a nurse bears a child; it amounts to much the same. The Lord ever *bare his people, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way they go,* and puts *underneath* them his *everlasting arms.* Our English terms are not always happy in the communication of these ideas. The words *believing* and *faithful* are sometimes applied, and even in our translation of the scriptures, to a sense different from that of the original; and, in some places, the word, which should give the idea of faith, is applied to something else, as in Ps. lxxviii. 8 and 37. where it is said of the Jews, that their *spirit was not stedfast with God,* and that they *were not stedfast in his covenant;* the words are, that their *spirit was not faithful,* or *had no faith in God,* and that *they were not believing,* or *had not faith, in his covenant;* agreeably to a more antient censure from God by *Moses,* that they were *a froward generation, children in whom was no faith.* *

This word *faithful* is one of the highest titles of the children of God; because the grace, which is denoted by it, enables them to give the most glory to the divine attributes and perfections, and to derive most for themselves from the divine fulness. The world or worldly men have but a poor opinion of this principle, or rather no true idea of it; and hence they either scoff at it as a low, simple, inenergetic, assent of mind, or a dangerous notion, which threatens to exterminate all the little goodness, which is left in the world. The reason of this is, because they have never known the conflicts of the soul, which the law of God, in the power of his Spirit,

* Deut. xxxii. 2.

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vehemently brings for the conviction of sin, or to show man his unrighteousness; and therefore being heart-whole, and ignorant of their own apostate nature and depravity, they suppose, that they can easily give credit to God, in the same way as they do to one another, and that they can act faith and do all sorts of faithful works, by their own natural powers so as to please him.

But faith in God through Christ (for true faith proceeds in no other way) is the sublimest and most difficult business in the world. It is indeed the greatest work upon earth of God's Spirit in the soul of man. When a poor creature hath his eyes opened to see the wrath of God hanging over him, on account of a wicked nature as well as a wicked life, and is convinced that he hath no power to extricate himself from the deep distress which overwhelms him; then, for him to cast himself fully and absolutely upon the truth of God, which hath set forth Christ as his propitiation, and to ground himself for eternity upon this, amidst the clamors of his own conscience, or the just accusations of the law, in the view of justice inseparable from the law, and in the face (as it were) of hell thirsting and opening its mouth to swallow him up; this is a work, this is an effect, which (as he afterwards will own) nothing less than the omnipotent *operation of God* could perform in him; nothing short of the free mercy and gift of an Almighty Saviour could bestow upon him. And, in doing this great work, through grace, (for God worketh in him to believe; not believes in him, as the papists, &c. object) he really gives God the highest glory, that can possibly be given him upon earth. For this is

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at once an act of the purest credit on the one hand, and of the utmost self-renunciation on the other, that can be shown by a mortal creature. When we are the agents or active, we do and are seen to do; and there is in this an assumption of hope or confidence from the act in ourselves: this, however, is not so much faith, as sense, and tends not to magnify God simply and entirely, but ourselves, at least in part, or in some subordination to him. By *doing*, a man is in danger of trusting more or less in himself; and, by being employed in acts of goodness, seems to have a little whereof to glory: but by *believing*, he disclaims himself, and confides in God; and the more simply and entirely he confides, the purer is the glory which he offers to the Divine Truth and Majesty. The highest honour a creature can render, is to believe in and depend upon the Lord for all in all. I say this of the purest actions of the most fervent Christians; for as to the world at large, their activities are low and gross, and (having no faith for their principle) are and must be sensual and selfish. Faith, therefore, is the purest grace, which can actuate the mind of man upon earth. It strips him of self, drives him from the world and sin, enables him to *roll* all upon his Lord with a holy complacency and resignation, and to give up into his hands the full management of what belongs to him for earth or heaven. And, without faith, it is impossible to do the least of these things.

Upon this account it seems to be, that the word of God is full of encomiums and examples of faith. According to our faith, so is every thing else. *All things are possible to him that believeth: but, without faith, it is impossible to please God.*

Corrupt

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Corrupt nature may be quickly engaged to attempt any thing, or every thing: but to believe, to go out of self, to cease from creatures for aid, and to act faith in a steady, simple, passive recumbence upon the truth and fidelity of God; this is no work for flesh and blood. The human heart rejects and abhors it altogether.

It seems easy in a way of reason *to take God at his word*, and right that it should be so: but reason is not faith, and can never ascend this holy mountain, nor perform, when the trial comes, this apparently easy and reasonable thing. Faith is a *gift*, which cometh down from above; and, wherever it is bestowed, it causes the soul to crucify that *fleshly wisdom*, that presumptuous and *intruding* * reason, which, not *holding* CHRIST *the head*, nor drawing grace and instruction from him, but from corrupt nature only, is in spiritual things the plague and enemy of every real Christian, because it is ever arguing against the life of grace in him, and troubling him with such cogitations of all kinds, as tend to draw away his heart, or to weaken his hand, in the course of his duty. They, who know not the conflicts of their carnal mind with the faith which God bestows, may well suspect whether they have faith or not; or, rather, whether they have not deceived themselves with speculations about godliness, instead of enjoying the real life and experience of it.

Abraham obtained faith in God; and the obedience of faith *followed* the life and possession of it. When the Lord commanded him to *leave all* and to *come out* from his kindred and the world; *by faith he went out, not knowing whither he went.* He reasoned not upon the

* Col. ii. 18.

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matter, nor asked the *why* or the *wherefore;* but gave himself up in devotedness to God. The same is said of him, when he was about to offer up his son *Isaac;* and the same is said of those, who are recorded, as examples of pure and lively faith, in that "golden legend" inscribed to the Hebrews. All of them did, what they did, BY FAITH: and it is so repeatedly and expressly put down, lest we should mistake the *works* for the *principle*, the *effect* for the *cause*, the mere *action* for the *life*; as we are prone to do. Had these gracious persons been left to themselves for the execution of any one of those deeds, which they performed; that is, if faith had not been granted them for the very purpose above their own natural powers, it is more than probable, that every one of them had been an apostate in the very thing they were enabled to do, and that, like *Cain*, *Esau*, or *Judas*, they would have given up God and his truth for the world, or for their own present convenience in it.

If any reader doubt of this, let him try to detach himself from the spirit of the world, to become a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, to crucify the affections of his flesh and spirit from what they naturally seek after, to give up his reputation, his interest, and inviting prospects among men, to live in devotedness of soul to God, and to desire above all things the promotion of the honour and glory of a crucified Saviour, and the spiritual welfare and salvation of others. I say, let him try, not merely to approve and talk of, but to put all this into practice. He will, I believe, either censure me as too rigid for such a proposal, or endeavour to explain it away and soften it into nothing. He will own, if he be honest to himself, that

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that it is impracticable upon the principles of natural strength and reason, or of (what men call) that common good sense, which leads them above all things to establish an interest here. At any rate, he will be no more able to comprehend how salvation can flow through such a simple grace, as faith will appear to be to him, than a carnal *Israelite* in the wilderness could have accounted for the restoration of health from the sting of a serpent, only by looking on a brazen one suspended on a cross or pole. The antitype, or thing signified, stands equally inexplicable to mere professors of Christianity now, as the type stood to the worldly and nominal *Israelites* of old. Those, who have faith in God and are living for heaven, know how extremely difficult this business of living by faith is to them at all times, and what a real warfare is carried on by that life against themselves; and these will humbly own, that they can never hope to prevail in any instance, or at any time, but through that faith in the Son of God, which draws down his almighty power continually to their relief.

I may further observe, in this place, that these things do not appear to the believer, nor are they acquired by him, in an abstract, metaphysical way, full of *groping* uncertainty; but *in the demonstration of the Spirit and with power*, which works such trust in him, and gives such evidence to him, as nature can neither work nor give. "God hath said this very thing; therefore it is true;" is made, in the first instance, as certain a proposition to his mind, as any mathematical demonstration can be to his sight: and, "God hath wrought what he said, therefore it is right or perfect;" is, in the next

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instance, rendered as plain a matter of fact to him as his own existence. The truth of the Bible stands upon these grounds, and hath in this way been confirmed from age to age. "JEHOVAH *said*; *the* ALEHIM *said*; JESUS *said*;" with the *infallible signs* following what was said; are the communications which God hath afforded to man, without descending otherwise to inform his judgement or reason, till he hath kindled and excited his faith. When we through grace believe, then we further understand, in these things, what to carnal reason alone, is, was, and ever will be, incomprehensible.

The creation of the world is, by its existence, obvious to every man. But the mode or manner of this creation, even in the things which are cognizable by sense, how incompetent is reason to explain? The theories, some of them presumptuous enough, which men have conjectured, are so numerous and contradictory, as prove but too plainly, that human reason may easily darken counsel without knowledge, but cannot find out God, nor study the Almighty, or his works, to perfection. If we come to redemption, which is a more elevated and spiritual theme; here reason usually fails at the very threshold, and blunders as she proceeds in a world of mysteries.* Nor concerning the office of the divine Spirit is she able, with more advantage, to inform herself. Here, *the wind bloweth where it listeth, and she heareth the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it*

* "Reason is an intellectual defect. For those beings, as God and the spirits above, who have the full force of intellection, need not reason; but apprehend truth by mere intuition." AQUIN. 2a. 2æ. q. 49. a. 5.

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cometh, nor whither it goeth. Men of great learning and ingenuity, inquiring, like *Nicodemus,* HOW *these things could be,* but inquiring by their own self-sufficient light, have lost themselves in a profound, which they had not line enough to fathom. The salvation of some, the preterition of others, and the lapse of all, have been and still are enigmas, which no philosopher, however acute, has been able, on the principles of corrupt reason, to settle or explain. And God refuses to indulge, if not prohibits, the exercise of that fallen faculty, while he commands faith to receive the whole upon his own testimony, which limits all "curious and carnal" researches,* by, *I have said;—I have done;†—I have made known;‡—And, Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*§

This name then, FAITHFUL, given to the children of God, is not an idle sound, meaning little or nothing, like the compliments and titles of men, but carries with it an idea of vast and sublime importance. They are faithful, because they live in and by faith, because they walk in faith, act by faith, hope in faith, rejoice in faith, wait patiently by faith, fight the good fight of faith, hold on and hold out by faith, gain the victory by faith, overcome death and the devil by faith, and at last by faith inherit the promises. Thus (according to the apostle) *whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world,* or all creatures which oppose salvation: *and this is the*

* Art. xvii. of the Church of England.
† Jer. xl. 3. Deut. v. 27. Isa. xlv. 7. xlvi. 11.
‡ 1 Chron. xvii. 19. Prov. i. 23. Col. i. 27.
§ Matt. xi. 25, 26.

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victory that overcometh the world, even our faith; because that unconquerable faithr is *born* or produced in the soul by the unconquerable Spirit of God. The flesh is not set to fight the flesh, or the world, or the devil: it has neither will nor power for such a work. Faith, springing from a divine agent, and looking to a divine Lord, can alone perform this mighty task. These are great and wonderful things; and the *precious faith of God's elect* performs them all. It can *remove mountains and cast them into the sea;* that is, no difficulty or opposition to its life and interest can be so vast, but it is able to overwhelm and reduce it to nothing. And this it can do, because the almighty Christ by his Spirit is in it, gives it, works it, works in and by it; and finally makes those, who have it, conquerors, and *more than conquerors, through* HIMSELF *that loved them.* When a worldling attempts to conceive of faith, he takes it to be a mere notion, a bare assent to something credible: and it amazes him when he hears or reads, that such mighty operations, as those abovementioned, are ascribed to the power of faith.* But the children of God know it to be *substance* indeed, and have experimental demonstrations of its power and reality; for the bestowment of which upon themselves they can bless their Saviour, though they cannot impart the blessing to others. This grace and benefit God hath reserved in his own hands, and bestows *according to the good pleasure of his will* through Jesus Christ.

The life of faith is a life of meek, quiet, childlike, dependence upon the covenanted truth and mercies of God

* Heb. xi. 1.

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in the Saviour of sinners. It is a life given, not earned. It is indeed impossible to earn that, which must be given before it can act, and, consequently, before it can pretend to earn: and when it is given, it is so far from presuming on its own merit or earning, that it runs to Christ for righteousness, grace, holiness, and every thing that is good. Nothing leads a man so entirely out of himself as true faith; and from this self-renunciation, as much, perhaps, as from any other exercise of it, may be discovered its real vigor and progression. The life of sense, or corrupt reason, on the contrary, proceeds upon self, and to self-determination, and consequently makes the mind its own factor to the augmentation of its own pride. He that lives thus upon self is and must be *high-minded* and full of his own importance; though, at the same time, all his conceit is vanity, and no solid certainty can arise from his reason in spiritual and heavenly things.*

When I ponder upon these matters, and upon all the manner of God's working in the hearts of his people for salvation, I cannot but breathe out an earnest prayer, that thus the Lord would accomplish in me, a poor helpless worm, all this his blessed *work of faith with power*. The more I look into myself, and especially under the liveliest impressions of his presence; the more wisdom, love, mercy, and unvarying benevolence do I perceive in this conduct of his beginning, continuing, and

* "'Tis not easy to conceive (said a very ingenious man) how widely reason may be mistaken; I mean the truest and best enlightened reason: or, what deceptions men may put upon themselves; I would say, the most accomplished and intelligent among men." Balzac. *Arist.* disc. iv.

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ending faith, within my own soul and the souls of his people. When I can act faith the most, then my prayers are most fervent, my activity and zeal the most ardent, my soul the most steady, and my desires for Christ, and none but Christ, the most animated and holy. Without faith, or its preception, all is drooping, dull, and dismal; and I may *shake myself as at other times*, like *Samson*, or employ myself in every means; but no strength or spirit remains for any exercise or trial of love and duty. I may go through the form indeed as before, and appear the same to other men; but I cannot be satisfied with this, or with any thing short of a tender access unto God, with the confidential liberty of a child, by the faith of *Jesus*.

Believer, I am persuaded, that I speak thy experience as well as mine. Thou art sensible of thine own weakness and manifold infirmities, by which thou art humbled in thyself, and driven to the Saviour. The law of works, broken, leaves thee no hope but in the law of faith, which preaches nothing but thy Redeemer. Thou canst, then, with the apostle, *most gladly glory in thine infirmities*; not for their own sake, but for the effect which grace produceth from them, in leading thee to the power of Christ, and in sheltering thee under his banner. Thus, *when thou art weak, thou art strong*; and when least in thyself, the greatest, and the safest, and most happy in him. Blessed paradox! none can explain it, but through a wisdom not their own: none desire it, but from the love of Christ, richly shed abroad within their hearts. O mayest thou, dear soul, go on with speed and success in this blessed way; and, by thy earnest

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earnest diligence of a lively faith, *cleave with* more and more *full purpose of heart unto the Lord!* He is faithful to his own faith bestowed, and will never cease till he crowns it with his glory. Look to him, then, with a single and patient eye; trust to him with a resigned simplicity and affection of heart: *He will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. He cannot deny himself;* he cannot relinquish his *workmanship*, his *husbandry*, his *building*: it shall never be charged upon him, that he was worse than his word, or that any one of the good things, which he hath promised for earth or heaven, hath not been fully made good to his redeemed, his *faithful*. Go on, I venture to beseech thee; go on, with all the privileged courage of faith; and, by faith, *hold fast the beginning of thy confidence to the end*. Soon shall all be answered; soon the truth of every promise proved; and soon thy soul made blissful and perfect for ever. O desirable state!—A state, for which thou art living, if living in thy right mind; and to which thou art hastening, in the Lord's own way and time. O may he bless thee, and receive thee at last to himself, among *the Spirits of just men made perfect*; the FAITHFUL, whose *names are written in heaven!*

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PRISONERS.

PRISONERS is a title for the spiritual condition of all men since the fall; but *prisoners of hope* is a name peculiar to the children of God. They are thus called, that they may humbly remember from what they are to be delivered, and at the same time may in hope consider the name, and some present privileges arising from it, as an earnest of their full redemption.

It was the appointed office of Christ *to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound*;* and not only to proclaim this jubilee, this year of grace, or acceptable year of Jehovah, but to perform what he proclaims. Jehovah himself was in Christ and *held his hand*, or gave him power, *to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.*† They are therefore called upon *to turn to the* STRONG HOLD;‡ and all, who really hear the voice of the Son of God, crying, *go forth*,§ and embrace by faith the covenant of his blood, are these *prisoners of hope*. Their hope springs from their faith. All others, having no faith, are said to be *without hope*, and remain in their prison still.

* Isa. lxi. 1. † Isa. xlii. 7.
‡ Zech. ix. 12. § Isa. xlix. 9.

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This natural captivity of the redeemed is most strikingly exhibited, under the colours of a true history, in what passed upon the sons of *Israel* in the land of *Egypt*. If we understand the lively facts of that great affair, to which such frequent reference is made in the Bible, as a grand memorial, in the true importance; we shall see, that they have a meaning which comes home to ourselves, and that the *interpretation* of them is not *private* or peculiar to one generation, but is common and general to the whole church of God.

Pharaoh represents the prince of darkness; and *Moses* and *Aaron*, uniting the offices of leader, prophet, and priest, exhibit the great Redeemer. The children of *Israel* are the subjects of redemption: the *Egyptians* are the powers of darkness, confederate with the men of the world.

1. *Pharaoh* was *in very deed raised up*, and *hardened*,* that God *might show in him his power, and that his name might be declared*, or recorded, *throughout all the earth*.† Satan, like this *vessel made unto dishonor*,‡ stands as a proof of God's indignation, without hope of mercy or redemption.

Pharaoh's first attack was upon the children of the *Israelites*, that their increase might be prevented, that the

* The word חזק, however harsh it may seem to some ears, admits of no softer sense, than that in our translation, and is repeated many times upon this occasion to declare, that, "to his own secret purpose God directs the worst actions of tyrants, no less than the best of godly princes." The reader is requested to compare these texts in Exodus with Isa. vi. 9. &c. John xii. 39, &c. Deut. ii. 30. Josh. xi. 20. Wisd. xix. 4. Ecclus. xvi. 15.

† Exod. ix. 16, x. 1. ‡ Rom. ix. 21.

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nation might fall, by the destruction of males, and be sunk amongst his *Egyptians*.—So the great business of Satan was *murder from the beginning*. He instigated the death of righteous *Abel*, in the infancy of the church. He prevents, in all ages, as much as in him lies, the increase of it. And it is his constant endeavour to sink the children of God into mere children of the world.

2. *Moses*, the deliverer, was more than (what is rendered) a *goodly child*; he was *fair to God*,* had grace given him from God, appeared in a most providential way, and was a *chosen vessel* for the deliverance of *Israel*. —Christ also, the great Redeemer, of whom the other was but a shadow, was *the elect* of God, was born and appeared like no other man, was persecuted of the devil, and was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power to bring in salvation.

3. The children of *Israel* were oppressed in *Egypt*; they *sighed*; they *cried*; by *reason of their bondage; and their cry came up unto God*.—The true *Israel* have ever been oppressed by the powers of darkness in the world: but when they have felt their bondage, and cried, and groaned, for their deliverance, God hath *heard* them and *remembered his* holy *covenant*.†

4. The *Egyptians*, the taskmasters, showed no pity to the sons of *Jacob*; but gave reproaches, in the hours of keen distress, and to their reproaches added blows and stripes.—The men of the world, their counter-part, have no feeling for a child of God groaning under the burden of sin, but add to his affliction, as much as may be, and, as their least degree of enmity, *shoot out their arrows, even bitter words*.

* Acts vii. 20. † Exod. ii. 23.

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These are the persons, who form the scene. Their course and actions are the next object of consideration. Briefly we may observe, that the whole together is a representation of God's grace to his people; of the nature and means of their redemption; of the progression of sin in worldly men; and of their final destruction with Satan, the author and promoter of sin.

When *Moses*, by divine command, proclaimed deliverance to the captives; the *Israelites* could scarcely believe the joyful sound. *Pharaoh* raged and stormed, blaspheming the Most High himself; and his officers increased their cruelty. All things appeared the more dark and alarming, as the deliverance drew nigh.* In the darkest moment of all, THEN Jehovah peculiarly revealed both HIMSELF, and his mighty power.† He not only showed himself to be the Alehim of *Moses*; but he made *Moses* himself, typically, to be the Alehim unto *Pharaoh*.—So when Christ brings peace to his people, they can scarcely know how to receive it, either from weakness of faith or excess of joy; the devil rages with all his might, blasphemes himself, and invites the soul to blaspheme; and the world, his tools, scoff or persecute, as they find opportunity. But, when Christ powerfully comes, he reveals Jehovah in covenant, and also the covenant of Jehovah, making all plain and comfortable to the conscience of the redeemed; and at the same time proves, that he is the devil's ruler, and the mighty one of *Jacob* to subdue him.

The first act of *Moses* and *Aaron* (whom we must

* Exod. v. and vi. 9 † Exod. vi. 1. 3, &c.

consider

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consider typically as one person with two offices) was to declare the divine commission and authority by a miraculous power. The emblem of this, the *rod* which God had given,* when thrown down before *Pharaoh*, or the enemy, became a serpent, and devoured or swallowed up all other rods, or authorities or powers, which came before it.†—How forcibly doth this action preach, that Christ hath power and authority over all enemies, and all things, for the welfare of his church!

When *Moses* had exhibited his divine commission, which was rejected; then began the series of judgements upon *Pharaoh* and his people. The FIRST of these was the turning of water into blood throughout all the land of *Egypt*, so that the *Egyptians* could not drink of the water in the river, or in store, but were constrained to dig for it elsewhere.—This was a figure of the declaration, that *the fountain of a perpetual running river troubled with foul blood*,‡ even the fountain of life, of which blood is the emblem, is polluted and corrupted in man by nature; and that therefore it is so under the curse and wrath of God, as to render it incapable of affording or enjoying that true life, which before the fall it had with him.

After *seven days were fulfilled*, which was the longest warning of all, *Moses* was commanded to denounce the SECOND judgement, which from the river overwhelmed the whole country, and every part of every dwelling, with *frogs*. This, like the former judgement, though it made a temporary impression, was ultimately in vain;

* Exod. iv. 17. † Exod. vii.
‡ Wisd. xi. 6.

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as the Lord foreknew and foretold.—This also is a figure, and an awful figure too, of the progression of sin, and of its *hardening deceitfulness*. When the fountain of life is corrupted, as man's is, it bringeth forth *abominable things*, filling the secret recesses of the heart, as well as the whole conduct and conversation, with evil. And if inconveniencies or afflictions arise from it, they only make impression for a time, and, when removed, or *respited* as the *Egyptian* trouble was,* are soon forgotten or repelled.

The THIRD judgement upon Pharaoh and his servants, which followed the curse on the *water* and the curse proceeding from its *filthy productions*, was the curse upon the *land*, the *dust* of which became *lice*, covering man and beast, throughout all the country. And though this was owned by the *wisest men* to be *the finger of God*; yet *Pharaoh's* heart was hardened.†—When God's judgements fall upon an obdurate heart, leaving it to produce all that is noisome and detestable; when the means of support are turned into perniciousness, and the means of grace harden in sin; when evil, and only evil, arises out of those very circumstances which to others are mercies (like the unprofitable dust, instead of fruits, from the fertile soil of *Egypt*;) we may well fear, that the finger of God is indeed sealing up a soul unto perdition. This falling from one degree of wickedness to another, is but the continuation of judgement begun, which must inevitably end in ruin.

The FOURTH plague was in the *air*, infesting it with *a heavy mixture* of all manner of flying vermin, down

* Exod. viii. 15. † Exod. viii. 19.

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to the very ground.* These annoyed the *Egyptians* only, the Lord expressly putting that *mark of his redemption*, a *division* between his people and *Pharaoh's* people, which stood for an eminent *sign* of his protection over the one and of his dominion over all. These *divers sorts of flies* (says the psalmist) *devoured them*; i. e. fed upon them with extremity of pain and trouble.—Thus what the curse upon the air produced to the body, the judgement upon the spirit of a man produces to his soul, even all manner of evil thoughts, pestilent opinions, false principles, and all the swarms of ambitious and detestable desires, which (as it were) feed upon and exhaust the mind. All these inflict stings upon the conscience, and weary, if not wear out, the heart of sinners: and this is a further stage towards everlasting ruin. How mercifully are God's people preserved from these torments of the soul! What a blessing is it to be *separated* from the evil notions, spirit, and practices, of a miserable world!

The FIFTH woe from God to the *Egyptians* was a *very heavy plague* upon the cattle, and, in short upon all that lived by the earth, water, and air, which administered support to man.* The *Israelites* only lost nothing.—This curse upon the *means* of life, and upon the *agents* appointed for its assistance and comfort; making a man's table his snare, and that which should have been for his welfare only a trap; is a mark of further indignation, and another step to final ruin. The children of God are preserved from this calamity by him,

* Exod. viii, 21. † Exod. ix. 3.

who

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who causeth every thing to work together for their good.

The SIXTH infliction of judgement increased in awefulness. It came home immediately to the *persons* themselves. The *ashes of a furnace* were sprinkled toward heaven in the sight of *Pharaoh*, bearing this implication, that it should be for a *curse of dust* (like that afterwards shaken from the feet of our Lord's disciples, for a testimony) against them, producing leprous boils with fiery ulcerations. Here the heart of the *magi* or *wise men* failed them; and they could no longer stand before *Moses*, nor calumniate the power of God. But the Lord yet hardened the heart of *Pharaoh*. —This is a figure, and the first in this order of curses, of impenitent dereliction and apostasy. The wrath of God, under the token of fiery dust, is scattered upon the enemies of his people, producing the most *noisome** and virulent sores of sin, and rendering their case preparatively *intolerable*† in the judgement. The sign threatened this dreadful calamity, that, as *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were *turned into ashes* and *condemned for an example to the‡ ungodly*, so the whole earth, *which now is, is kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgement, and perdition of ungodly men*;§ under the ban of *Anathema Maran-atha*,‖ which shall be *executed, when the Lord cometh with his saints, to convict* the ungodly of their evil words and deeds against him and his people.¶ And the confirmation, that this belongs to them, is,

* Rev. xvi. 2. † Mat. x. 15. xiii. 42.
‡ 2 Pet. ii. 6. § 2 Pet. iii. 7.
‖ 1 Cor. xvi. 22. ¶ Jude 15.

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that (like *Pharaoh*) their heart is hardened; and they make light of it all. On the other hand, the Lord *chooseth* his people *in the furnace of affliction*, both to purify and to *bring them out of it*.*

As the plagues increase, and proceed on to their dismal period, so do the warnings in their aweful solemnity; though all in vain,† The SEVENTH judgement is brought forward: and a wonderful and unexampled one it was. A *grievous or heavy hail* descended with *fire;* hardened unmelting water with piercing inextinguishable flames, accompanied with thunder the most tremendous, destroyed all that was without cover through the whole land, except in the province of *Goshen* where the *Israelites* sojourned. These dreadful terrors extorted an acknowledgement of God's justice in punishing sin, and sudden promises of compliance with God's commands, earnest intreaties even of the despised *Moses's* prayers, and a strong desire to be released from the pain; but the terror neither purified the conscience, nor changed the heart. When the plague ceased, the former *hardness* returned or remained; and *Pharaoh sinned yet more*, or (as the word is) *added*, or *went forward, to sin.*—Thus it is spiritually. The terrors of God alone, the denunciations of his vengeance, or even the sight of hell itself, do not and cannot change or renew the mind of a sinner, though they may frighten him in the highest degree. He may relent for a time, acknowledge his undeniable sinfulness, make many protestations of reformation, and request even the prayers

* Isa xlviii. 10. with Deut. iv. 20.
† Exod. ix. 14, &c.

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of real Christians; but, if there be nothing more than these ebullitions of nature in the case, he will return, like the dog and sow in the scripture, to what he was before; and thereby afford a proof, that it is not the sense of pain or removal of distress, but the abhorrence and removal of sin through faith in the Redeemer, which can alone affect and alter the state of the soul.

The EIGHTH curse was brought forward, after the Lord had said, *I have hardened* Pharaoh's *heart, and the heart of his servants* למען שתי *for the very purpose of my fixing these my signs* בקרבו *within him*;* and also, that it might be recorded and remembered by *Israel*. This was the plague of *locusts*,† infinite in number, and ravaging in kind. They covered the earth, filled the houses, and devoured all that was left. Such locusts as these were never seen before, or since.—The psalmist tells us what they denoted. The Lord *cast upon them* [the

* Exod. x. 1, 2.

† *Bochart* informs us, from *Damir*, an Arabic writer, that no creature is so pestiferous to the *Arabians* and *Africans* as the locusts. They come in swarms incredible, march on over every thing, ravage a whole harvest in a few hours, and are not to be destroyed by any means. Their bite is painful; and the saliva, or moisture of their bodies is the very poison of herbs. When they die, they fill the air with a noisome smell, which is usually followed by the plague. *Hieroz.* apud POLI *Syn.* in loc. If the common locusts were so terrible; how much more dreadful must those be, which God sent, above all example?—A judgement from enemies, under an almost similar type, is threatened to the Jews, from the hissing or humming fly, which *the Lord would hiss for in the uttermost parts of the river of Egypt*, i. e. in *Abyssinia*, where this terrible and pernicious insect is said to prevail, and to drive all creatures, at a certain season, before them. See BRUCE's *Travels*. Vol. i. p. 390.

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Egyptians] *the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending* EVIL ANGELS *among them.** To the same purpose is the Revelation made to St. *John*.† The *locusts*, like *scorpions*, inflicting *torment*, are expressly the evil spirits, whose *king is the angel of the bottomless pit*, bearing the name and occupation of *Abaddon*, the destroyer. Thus, when men continue in *hardness* and in an *impenitent heart*,‡ *they treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgement of God*. They become possessed of legions of sins by legions of devils. *A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth*, says the prophet *Joel*, prophesying in the Spirit, and explaining this direful dereliction of sinners for sin.§ *The* LORD *will utter his voice before his army; for his camp is very great: for he is strong, that executeth his word; for the day of the* LORD *is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?*—It is a fearful thing indeed for the soul to be given up, as a cage of unclean birds, to the full possession and ravage of the spirits of destruction.

The NINTH judgement brought *darkness which might be felt*, over the land of *Egypt*, while *the children of* Israel *had light in their dwellings*. Under this curse *Pharaoh* resolved to see *Moses* no more; and thus excluded himself from further help and hope, and every means of either. This was the prelude and anticipation of that *blackness of darkness for ever*, which it signified, to sinners, who *cannot cease from sin*. Blindness of

* Ps. lxxviii. 49. † Rev. ix. 3, &c.

‡ Rom. ii. 5.—αμεταμετον, *impœnitibile*, ERASM. "that cannot repent." *Old Transl.* § Joel. ii.

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mind, judicial darkness of the understanding, rebellious sinning against the demonstrations and signs of the Holy Ghost; are the *sealing up* for judgement, and the previous introduction to it. After this plague of darkness, therefore, to the *Egyptians*, there remained but one curse more; and that was the finishing sign of entire dereliction and determined reprobation.

This awful token was exhibited in the TENTH curse, under which followed, at midnight, in the darkest and most unexpected hour, the sad and solemn scene, of *cutting off the* FIRST-BORN among the *Egyptians*. Not a house was found in the land, *where there was not one dead.**—All this stands upon record to declare, that they who reject the counsel of God against themselves, who persevere in sin and unbelief under every variety of afflicting and admonishing dispensations, who make light of the things of God, who hate his people and his truth, and who will not have Christ, the GREAT FIRST-BORN, to reign over them, neither regarding his sacrifice nor his person; *shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.* To these, who wilfully, maliciously, and perseveringly, sin, after the knowledge of the truth, held out unto them, there *remaineth* no passover, no atoning lamb, no substituted first-born; *but a certain fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.* As the *Egyptians*, after this dreadful sign, had no place for repentance, or further warning; so those, who finally reject the Lord *Jesus*, can

* Exod. xii. 29. 30.

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have no further admonition, no other Saviour; but must be involved in despair and wretchedness for evermore.

Thus have we considered briefly (what indeed should have a more copious consideration) the *prisoners of sin*, and their end. The *prisoners of hope*, though prisoners by nature in the spiritual *Egypt*, as well as the others, have a different course and a different end: and these we shall treat of, under the next name, more particularly. In the mean time, lift up thy heart, O reader, and ask; to which of these two kinds thou mayest be said to belong? If thou art a prisoner of sin, consider the *course*, and the *end* of these things; and *pray if haply thy sins may be forgiven thee*, lest thou fall into misery: if a prisoner of hope, be thankful to JEHOVAH for his mercy, and bless his holy name; while we consider, in the next place, the means of hope, and the end of hope, in thy gracious redemption.

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RANSOMED, OR REDEEMED.

We have considered, in the sign of *Pharaoh* and his servants, under the last title, the progression and the end of sin: in this, we have a more delightful theme, even the means of mercy, and the representation of redemption, under the preservation of the children of *Israel*. These were bondmen and prisoners in *Egypt*: and it is one special purpose of their history to show, that, without God's peculiar help, they could never have released themselves. It does not even appear, however distressful their circumstances were, that they so much as thought of deliverance: certainly, they were so entirely enslaved, that they did not attempt any means or make any efforts for their own liberation. On the contrary, it is plain that the *mixed multitude*, after their release, had thoughts of returning to their old condition, only for the gratification of their appetites, under every circumstance of baseness and drudgery. Like *Edomites*, as they were afterwards called, and true children of *Esau*, for one morsel of meat or one mess of pottage, they were ready to part with, what is better than mere life, a just liberty, and with it their birthright, for which only life is valuable at all.

Moses, then an old and obscure man, (about fourscore years of age) was commissioned, from feeding sheep, to superintend a nation. Dying out of the world, and dead to it; he had, and could have, no ambitious views (as

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some have inconsiderately, as well as maliciously, supposed) and especially as he had renounced them all before in the prime of life, by *refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter*, under which character he might, had worldly grandeur been his object, been lord not only of the miserable *Israelites*, (as they have been termed) but of the wise and opulent *Egyptians*, their masters.* The Lord appeared to him in a burning bush, which was neither consuming in the flame, nor to be consumed by it. This was the proper emblem of the state of his church upon earth. In the midst of the fire, God is with his people, so that they cannot be destroyed; and he gave this token, as the *sensible* demonstration of that truth, to *Moses*, and through him to all that should hereafter believe.

This angel of JEHOVAH, or *messenger of the covenant*, who *was in the church in the wilderness*, was CHRIST IMMANUEL; and he revealed himself to *Moses* as the divine essence, under the title of (what we render GOD) I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE, I AM, EVER WAS, AND EVER WILL BE.† That is, what Christ IS to his people, he ever WAS before all time in covenant, and WILL BE to all eternity in faithfulness; and therefore he more expressly made himself known to the *Israelites* in affliction, both as the ALEHIM of their *fathers*,‡ i. e. engaged in covenant, and also peculiarly as JEHOVAH in himself, who therefore *ever liveth* to make it good,

* See his refusal of greatness for himself and family, in Exod. xxxii. 10, 11. And his family was afterwards sunk in his own tribe, as appears from 1 Chron. xxiii. 14.

† *Ehjah asher Ehjah, Jehovah.* Exod. iii. 14. vi. 3. Rev. i. 8.

‡ Exod. iii. 6, 13.

and

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and who *changeth not** in his purposes of performing it. Such a revelation, and such a comforting assurance, were especially needful at that time both for *Moses* and the people; and hence the particular emphasis, which was laid upon the testimony, and the establishment of the covenant with them.†

Pierced to the soul, they, or the greater part of them, could scarcely believe in the promise of so strange and improbable a deliverance.‡ But their unbelief upon this occasion did not make void the promise of God. They had seen, though their anguish had caused them to pass by or forget, the miraculous credentials of *Moses*, who had showed them this great sign, that the *rod* of his divine commission, when *thrown upon the ground*, was a *serpent*; i. e. when the power, with which he was armed, shall be exerted upon the earth or men of the world, it would be destruction itself to them; but *in his hand*, as the leader of the people, it would prove a salutary defence and protection. They appear to have neglected also the other tokens of divine presence and authority, which he manifested to them.§ The Redeemer, however, went on with the great design, overcoming the reluctance of *Moses*, and the doubts of the people; having previously revealed the wonders to be performed, the future obduracy of *Pharaoh*, and the ruin which should befall him, while *Moses* was employed in the redemption of his people.

Thus God dealeth with his redeemed in spirit. His

* Mal. iii. 6. 1 Sam. xv. 29.
† Exod. vi. 7, 8. ‡ Exod. vi. 9.
§ Exod. iv. 1—19.

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whole church, and every individual member of it, is, by the fall of nature, in misery and bondage to the prince of darkness; and usually in the extremity, or their deepest sense, of this misery, he reveals mercy. And he reveals it, as a *sure*, because a *covenanted*, mercy; as that which therefore never fails, and as that which consequently is truly proper to comfort and establish the soul. This is so supereminent a blessing, that, at first, they know not how to believe or receive it; till, by reiterated instances of grace and power, they are enabled to behold, how fit it is for them, and how fit they are for it. The convictions, which attend or lead to these circumstances, are painful; but these painful convictions are as the circumcising knife of the law, cutting off the old man with his works and covenant of works, and preparing them for the joyful reception of a precious Saviour through the gospel. By these means, they go out of the mere condition of nature into the state of grace. They *pass over* (as the Hebrew word is) *into the covenant of Jehovah their Alehim and into his oath*,* and from thenceforward are considered in the new-relation to him of *children and heirs*, instead of rebels and *enemies by wicked works*.

All this was preached to the *Israelites* in the *passover*; and, through the passover and its attendant circumstances, unto us. The representation of this most interesting truth, under the figure of a *lamb slain*, is given us in that glorious chapter, the twelfth of *Exodus*. Our religion is not a *new* religion, nor *essentially* different from that of the ancients. So far from it, we ought to

* Deut. xxix. 12.

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thank God, with the apostle, and to *serve him* (as he did) *from the forefathers*, not contrarily to them, *with pure conscience*.* They are *the cloud of witnesses*, who testify those truths which we are to *believe* and to *follow*.

The month, in which this great sacrament was exhibited, God commanded to be the beginning of a new reckoning, or epoch, of time to his people; and, accordingly, it became the first month of the *sacred*, as it was before the seventh of the *secular* year. And this, perhaps, hath a prophetic view, not here to be explained. Each house was to take a lamb, which was to be slain by the head of each house, according to the patriarchal system then in force: and this being done by these persons, the lamb itself is said to have been killed, or to have its blood drawn out, as though it had been one lamb only, by the כל קהל עדת *whole church of the congregation*, between the two evenings, i. e. when the sun was declining, or about our three o'clock in the afternoon. This seems to be thus expressed to declare, that the great anti-type was *one lamb* slain for *one whole church*; and that the many lambs, distributed to and slain in the respective housholds, signified, that the many communities of God's people, widely separated in place or ages, are conjointly participants of the one common and general benefit of CHRIST *once slain* in the fulness of time. The application of this is the beginning of a new and heavenly life in the several children of God, as they become, in their order, *first partakers* of Christ. And these children, or partakers, are collectively the *whole of the called*, or *general assembly of the first-born*;

* 2 Tim. 1. 3. with Acts xiii. 32. and xxxvi. 22.

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and thus Christ, though once slain as the one undivided offering for them *all*, is communicated from age to age to each and *every one* of them,* as though he were, in point of interest and efficacy for each, one lamb, or one offering, for each alone.

The lamb was to be *drawn out of the flock*, to be without blemish, a male of the first year, to be roasted with fire in every part, of which nothing was to remain for another day, not the least portion to be carried to another house, and not a bone to be broken.—This was all typical of Christ. He was *one of many brethren*, having the same flesh to suffer and to offer for them: he was without blemish or spot of sin, a perfect man in the prime of life: he endured the fiery indignation of *Jehovah*, as the lamb-like substitute of his redeemed, in every part of his body and soul; whence those bitter exclamations, expounding this circumstance and foretelling the sorrows of the Redeemer, in the 22d and other Psalms: he was to perform this sacrifice of atonement in *one* day, at one time, never to be repeated: he cannot be carried from house to house, according to the will of man, and so applied beneficially to other

* This is the evident sense of Heb. ii. 9. The ὑπὲρ παντὸς doth not mean *every man*, but *every one* of those, of whom the context treats; the *sons* and *children* of God, and Christ's *given* and *sanctified*, or *separated*, *brethren*. On these his blood was *sprinkled* spiritually, that is, *distributed* in its merits among them, for sprinkling is distribution into parts: and hence ensues their separation, or regeneration, from the world. His blood is upon those, and those only; and therefore they are pardoned: his blood, or life is in them, and in none but them; and therefore they are *alive unto God*.

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men's souls; for they only who feed upon Christ, in their own house, in their own hearts, or in the houshold or church of the faithful, are partakers of the gracious blessing, which they cannot impart to another; according to that text, *a brother* [the dearest friend in the world] *can by no means ransom a man; nor give to God a covering*, or atonement, *for him.** Not a bone of Christ was broken; i. e. he was not overcome by the dreadful conflict; nor shall one of his mystical members, called his bones,† therefore, be demolished or lost.

The lamb, thus slain and sprinkled, became typically *the* LORD'S PASSOVER. The literal meaning of this word, (according to *Vitringa* and Bishop *Lowth* who quotes him, on Isa. xxxi. 5.) is, to *cover*, or *protect by covering*, to *spring forward*, to *throw oneself in the way*, in order to cover and protect. Thus the typifying blood and merit of the lamb slain was *interposed* between the destroyer and the Israelites, and *covered* and *sheltered* them from the general calamity, which fell upon the Egyptians.—And, in like manner, CHRIST OUR PASSOVER, who *was sacrificed for us*, covers his people by the merit of his blood and righteousness, *shelters them* (as it were) *under his wings*, and so *delivers them from the wrath to come.*

The people of *Israel*, before eating, were to sprinkle the blood of the lamb, or *strike it*, on the *two side-posts, and on the upper door-post of the houses, wherein they eat it.* They were to eat the flesh *in that night*, with *unleavened bread*, and *bitter herbs.* Their *loins* were to be *girded*, their *shoes* to be *on their feet*, their *staff in their hands;*

* Ps. xlix. 7. † Eph. v. 30.

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hands; and they were to *eat in haste;* because it was *the very passing-over of* JEHOVAH, or *to* JEHOVAH; and because JEHOVAH *passed over the land of* Egypt, in the same night, to *smite all the first-born* in every place, where the blood was not exhibited for the commanded token. There was, however, this restriction; no uncircumcised persons, whether Jew or proselyte, could eat of the passover; and, particularly, no נכרי* or *unbelieving stranger;* no תושב† or *sojourning alien;* no *hireling;* but only the גר‡ the *proselyted stranger,* moved with the fear of God, when circumcised, should have any participation of it.—All this is full of evangelical mystery. The children of God, before they can "feed upon Christ with thanksgiving," come to the blood of the Lamb, and have it sprinkled by faith upon their consciences, at the very entrance and beginning of their divine life, upon all their faculties and powers corporal and intellectual.* In the hour of darkness, in the night of sin, which finally brings destruction to others, they begin to live. They live upon Christ, and eat him, not

* Exod. xii. 43. † V. 45.

‡ V. 48. The calling of the Gentiles was ever in view; and provision was made for proselytes constantly in the law. There was a *first* passover, to which those, who were prepared, were admitted; and there was a *second* (Numb. ix. 10, &c.) in behalf of those, who were not ready, or *in a journey afar off,* and therefore might not celebrate the first. Thus, the Gentiles, who were *common and unclean,* in a legal view under the first dispensation, and *far off* (Eph. ii. 13.) from God in a spiritual sense, were to be admitted to Christ the true passover, under another dispensation or time, and to communicate equally with the more antient church in all its privileges and mercies. * 1 Thess. v. 23.

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with the *leavened* * *bread* of the old man or carnal nature, but with the *unleavened bread of* that *sincerity and truth*, which is only to be found in the faith of the mind renewed. Their loins are spiritually to be girt; they are to have their shoes on their feet; their staff is to be in their hands; and they are to eat in haste: i. e. they are to act like strangers upon a journey, or prisoners newly released going home, who do not incumber themselves, nor would meet with any hindrance. They are making a rough and sometimes a tedious journey, through a wilderness, and from an enemy. It is necessary, therefore, that they should be diligent, earnest, eager, and watchful. They want the preparation of the gospel of peace for their feet, and a staff of defence or support for their hands: they cannot, must not loiter, or sit down; but eat standing, and ready to depart. They are passing to God from the vengeance, which now threatens,

* שאר *leaven.* The word also stands for *flesh*, mere flesh. *They that are in the flesh*, or live and *walk in the flesh, cannot please God.* חמץ *leavened bread*, that which is *fermented*, and *wrought* by the leaven: Spiritually; all *dead works*, proceeding from the corrupt *fermentation*, or *zeal*, or *agitation* of flesh, or carnal nature. To these is opposed מצות *unleavened bread*, which the apostle expounds by *sincerity and truth*, that which will bear to be examined in the light, and is consequently *pure* and *perfect*. This denotes Christ, or the grace of Christ. *Purge out therefore* (says St. *Paul*) *the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump*, or temperament, *as* YE *are unleavened.* 1 Cor. v. 7. Our Lord applies *leaven* to *false doctrine*, the evil food of the soul. Mat. xvi. 11, 12. With these ideas, the evangelical reader will see into the importance of that solemn command, concerning the typical remembrance of Christ, the Ransomer, in Exod. xii. 15—20.

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and will ere long destroy, the world: and God will pass over them without hurt, in the hours of death and judgement, in no other way, or by no other means, than by their participation of Christ. If this first-born Lamb, Christ, is not their's; they know, that their own first-born, their own souls, must bear the sin, and suffer. And they see, that no mere profession of Christ, no dwelling among his people, no self-seeking, will suffice: the circumcision of the heart, the putting off the old man, and the reception of Christ, will alone stand them in stead in the day of God. Therefore, they do, as the children of *Israel* did,—*make ready* for the journey, and assure themselves, that all shall come to pass, as the Lord hath spoken.

This ordinance of the passover was to be a *memorial* to the *Israelites*, that, at such a time, and by such means, the Lord delivered them from their slavery, through his mighty power. And, that they might have it ever before their eyes and upon their hearts, they were not only to have a *solemn meeting** at a certain time, in express commemoration of this great transaction, but all sorts of sacrifices and services also were instituted for a more frequent and even daily observation; all of which had reference to this first great offering of the paschal lamb, and are only different exhibitions to represent, more distinctly and evidently, the different parts of the same thing.—So believers, under the Christian dispensation, are exhorted to have the sacrifice and merit of Christ always in remembrance; and for this end, both the

* Exod. xii. 16. *An holy convocation*, or assembly of the faithful; those, who were *the church*.

assembling

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assembling of themselves together, and also the sacrament of the Lord's supper itself (which last was instituted by Christ instead of the passover, as another sign and continuation of the same principle,) were enjoined as memorials of their redemption by Christ, till his second coming to judge the world.

Finally; the same angel of the covenant, who brought the sons of *Israel* out of bondage, assuming the image of a *cloud* and *pillar* of fire, led them on towards the promised inheritance, supported them through all the way, destroyed their enemies by means which at the same time preserved themselves, and gave them constant occasions of triumph in the God of their salvation.* And thus, the true *Israel*, under the guidance and protection of their Redeemer, find the sea and the waters of the great deep dried up, and in the depths of the sea a way to pass over: the world and all the multitude of their enemies are subdued before them, and, in the very midst of them all, the ransomed are led with safety to their home. *The redeemed of the* LORD (says *Isaiah*, alluding to the typical deliverance of the Jews) *shall*

* Another remarkable instance of divine appearance in their behalf occurred to them under *Joshua*, who, filled with the Holy Spirit, called upon the orbs of nature to stop in their courses. This was done, partly to show, that all nature and the fabric of the universe are subservient to the kingdom of God and his designs for his people; and partly to demonstrate to the idolaters of those times, that their objects of worship were subject to Jehovah, and that, instead of affording their worshippers any aid, were rather devoted, by a power superior, to the assistance of *Israel* their destroyers, who had the true Alehim; or, as it is usually expressed, *the Alehim is for or with Israel.* So the words might be rendered in 1 Sam. xvii. 46. *et al.*

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*return, and come with singing to Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.**

Believer! thou seest here the *ransom* paid by thy Redeemer; a ransom paid by himself, and at the expence of his most precious blood. The blood is the life: and he poured out his life, to deliver thee from death and the pit of hell. He was and is *Immanuel*; and therefore the blood, though coming mediately from his human nature, had, by the union of that nature with his divinity, a divine virtue in it; for which reason it is called *the blood of God.*† The life of God was in that wonderful person called Christ, as well as the life of man: and when he offered up the last in sacrifice, the infinite vigor and

* Isa. li. 11. To this *restitution* ανακαλυψιν, implying both the great restoration, or adjustment in their own place, of the people of God, and the final *revolution* of *all things* in *new heavens* and a *new earth*, I apprehend, the apostle alludes in Acts iii. 21. And possibly, the same thing is signified in Numb. x. 35, 36. *When the ark set forward, Moses said; Rise up* JEHOVAH, *and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee, flee before thee.* That is; while the church of God is moving on in its course through the wilderness of this world, she is to call upon the Lord for his presence and protection against all her enemies. *And when the ark rested, he said,* שובה, *Restore, convert, deliver fully from captivity, the ten thousand thousands of Israel.* That is; in all the restings of faith, and consolations of hope, which the church may meet with here, she is to consider herself in an enemy's country, and is to look forward to the great rest which remaineth for the people of God, and to call upon him to "accomplish the number of his elect, and to hasten his kingdom;" or, in the language of those already departed, who were to *rest yet for a little season, to cry out, How long, O Lord, holy and true!*

† Acts xx. 28.

glory

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glory of the first imparted infinite merit to the deed, and through it established an everlasting propitiation for sins, swallowing them up (as it were) like a little drop in a boundless ocean. This is the merit, Christian, which ransoms thee from the curse of guilt, the captivity of Satan, and the dreadful extremities of these in a future world. This alone preserves, and will ever preserve, thee from the deep abyss: and this alone is infinitely and eternally sufficient. *Cast* or roll *thy burden* then, *upon the Lord; and he shall sustain thee.* Thou hast not yet sinned beyond infinite merit and promised mercy; it is a diminution to the rich grace of the Redeemer to suppose it. An hard and impenetrable heart, denying and resisting the Holy Ghost in his testimony of Jesus, and persevering in this course against all light and evidence, is the great and dreadful sign of a reprobate mind. If sin be thy load, thy hate, and thy terror; come and welcome to this Saviour, this Lamb of God, *who taketh away the sins of the world;* the sins of Gentiles, as well as of Jews; the sins of this day, and the sins of thousands of years, equally together. The keener thy bitterness of spirit was under bondage, the happier will be the reception of that precious salvation which delivers from it.

Come then, my Christian friend and perpetual brother, who hast tasted indeed of that true liberty of grace and holiness, with which the Redeemer maketh his people free; come, and let us rejoice together. Let us sing the song of *Moses* and the Lamb by anticipation; as we hope to sing it in everlasting harmony hereafter. "JEHOVAH the Redeemer hath indeed triumphed

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gloriously: all the agents and contrivers of evil are thrown into the sea, are swallowed up for ever. It was thy right hand, O LORD, which is glorified in power: it was thy right hand, which dashed in pieces and utterly destroyed the enemy. Fear and dread shall fall upon them: by the greatness of thine arm, they shall be still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till that people pass over, whom thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance; in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; in that [cœlestial] sanctuary, O LORD, which thy hands have established. The LORD shall reign for ever and ever!" Amen.

FREE.

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FREE.

OUR Lord said to the Jews, *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.** He said this to persons, whose ancestors had been delivered from the bondage of *Egypt*, and who declared for themselves, that they were never in bondage to any man. He did not therefore mean a temporal, but a spiritual freedom. Accordingly he explained himself by saying, *Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin*, and so much the servant of sin, as to be wholly incapable of delivering himself from the bondage; upon which account he added, *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* None else could release them; though *he* could do it completely.

Upon this great truth of man's slavery under sin and Satan, the whole Bible is founded. It would be absurd, to speak of the fall of man, of his entire apostasy from God, of redemption by a Saviour, and of hope in a Saviour; if man were free in the use of his powers, or if indeed he had powers to assert his freedom, and by his own strength, either of mind, will, or affections, could "turn himself unto God." The fact is; he is so "tied and bound in the chain" both of his sins and sinfulness,

* John viii. 31, 32.

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that he *cannot get forth.* Nor hath he any inclination, except what may arise from the slavish fear of hell, or from some inconvenience to his natural lusts and passions. Hence, he is looked upon as *dead* before God, *dead in trespasses and sins,* without any spiritual life, and consequently without the least natural power to raise up himself, or the least desire after any such thing. Like the *bones* in the prophecy, he lies in the *open valley* of the world, *and lo, he is very dry.** The Spirit of God alone could restore life to such bones as these, who represent *the whole house of Israel,* or the whole family and church of God by nature. And if *these* were *dry bones* in their natural state; can we suppose, that there is more vigor or sense of spiritual life in the rest of the world? If *these* had no spirit in them, till God was pleased to bestow it: where upon earth may we expect to find this spirit of life beside?

The *bondage of corruption* (as 'tis called) though it falls upon all men; yet none of them feel it, till they are *quickened with Christ* and *made alive unto God.* And this is a further demonstration of their ruined state and helpless misery. When they have life given, they groan under it, and look out for a release: and where this comes to pass, the release shall surely be found; because the life was given for that very purpose.

Every natural and moral evil came in by sin. It was part of the curse imposed upon degenerate man, that he should serve the earth (from which he was taken, and over which he was otherwise to have ruled) in tilling

* Ezek. xxxvii. 2.

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the ground by severe and constant labor. That curse fell on his nature and his offspring universally. All men, it is but too evident, *serve the earth*, seek it in the first place, expect nothing but earthly good, cultivate in different modes only a worldly interest, imagine every bliss, but what this earth affords, ideal or enthusiastic, and, though much misery constantly attends their whole labor and expectation, are yet able to look no higher, but dread the very thought of a removal. The devil's curse was to *grovel* upon the ground, and, for a stigma of vileness, to eat (as it were) the very dust of what he had depraved, or (what that food signifies) to live in perpetual infamy without the least happiness or hope. Out of the dust groweth and can grow nothing: and dust mingled with fire, or ashes made by fire, serves to convey a very strong idea of the keenest torment, helplessness, and despair.

If this depravity of man be true; and true it is, if the word of God be true; what becomes of all those equally ignorant and arrogant pretences, which many have set up, of free will, free agency, spontaneity of determination, and the essential right and powers, in spiritual things, of human nature? If we believe God, rather than man, we must account them to be but idle dreams at the best, if not noxious speculations, or rather rebellious declarations against the truth of God. They may indeed be adorned with the greatest show of carnal and corrupt reason, and with all the splendors of style, or learning, or metaphysical reverie; but, like the garnished sepulchres of the dead, they have only an outward glare of unprofitable pomp, covering at the same time filth,

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and rottenness, and what no stomach can endure to examine, within.*

* This frame of mind is described in lively colors by the prophet. Isa. lxv. 2, &c. The words are spoken of *Israel* (Rom. x. 21.) God's professing people. These walked (i. e. the carnal among them) *in a way not good*, because it was *after their own thoughts*, their own corrupt and carnal reason, and not after the truth in the word. They provoked the Lord to anger *continually to his face*, day by day when they came up to his sanctuary. They *sacrificed in gardens*, i. e. followed the heathen or wicked world in the spirit of those lusts and tempers, which were indulged openly in idolatrous ceremonies: they *burned incense upon altars of brick*, i. e. pretended to offer prayer and worship, not upon Christ the true *altar* upon which no human tool, no mortal aid, was to be lifted up, but upon *altars* of their own making and devising (as bricks are the fabrications of man) imagining their own *will-worship* and righteousness would procure an acceptance. And yet these *remained among the graves and lodged in the monuments*, i. e. they were not brought out from spiritual death, but *remained* therein as they were born, and they lodge or rest among the dead in sin and in the places of their abode. They *eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;* not literally but spiritually, for no Jew did this, or, if he had, could not have made the pretence in the next verse concerning superior sanctity: they lived upon the abominable trash and in the abominable spirit of this world: it was their food to wallow at least secretly in sin, and their feast to eat of such things as please the world, the flesh, and the devil. And yet, because of some formal attentions, lip-service, and corporal ceremonies, they blindly presumed upon their own righteousness, and arrogantly could say to other men, *Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou.*—But God's judgement of them is far otherwise—*These are a smoke, an offensive vapor, in my nose;* kindling a continual fire of anger against them in all they say or do. And the Lord declared his purpose to reject all these, and to give his blessing to others, as in v. 9. *I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains; and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.*

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This is man—the natural man. What a miserable mortal in his external frame; and, inwardly, what a hideous wretch! Dark, stupid, senseless, bound, enervated, and, to all spiritual hope and goodness, lost and dead!

In this common condition, the mercy of God, arising from motives and counsels all his own, is vouchsafed to his chosen. As *brands from the burning*, consuming, and in the way to be consumed, he *plucks* them from this helpless state, and marks them for his property by an act of his sovereign will. He causes them to know and to feel, that he only had power enough to *redeem them from all evil.* Indeed, he only was rich enough to provide a *ransom;* but it cost him dearer than the creation of a thousand worlds; for it cost him the life and sufferings of his Son, whom yet he did not *spare*, and who would not be spared. Such was *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for their sakes he became poor, that they through his poverty*

It hath indeed been frequently seen, that those who have laid the greatest stress upon mere holiness, as a virtue to be found or raised in man and urged it from natural principles, have, in the first instance, been generally unacquainted wherein true holiness consists, making it up in a punctilious and ceremonious attention to outward duties, or in sanctimonious appearances, without a weaning of the heart from the world or winning it to God; and, in the next instance, have been frequently left to fall into some gross misconduct or other, to their own reproach and to the reproach of religion through them. Indeed, this is by no means wonderful; for, when a man presumes upon his own powers, it may be expected, as no effect can rise above its cause, that he will run into evil; corrupt nature being able of itself to produce nothing better.

might

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*might be rich.** The full price of their redemption was paid; and in consequence of it a *glorious liberty* was bestowed. The sum is far beyond human or created computation: and therefore *the purchased possession*, his own dear-bought people and portion, is valued by him accordingly.

The liberty, which the Lord bestows, is really life from the dead; and he himself is the life of that liberty. He exercises, augments, carries it on, and supports it, from day to day. Insomuch that his people cannot so properly say of themselves, that *they live*, as that *their Lord liveth in them.* When they want the vigor of this divine life, they look by faith to him for a supply: and faith itself, which is the channel of this life, and the root of all other Christian virtues, was given to them for this purpose. Thus they *live by faith*, and *walk by faith*: that is, through faith they receive all their spiritual life, and are enabled to proceed in it and to use it. As the *rational life* flows from the union of the soul with the body, but so as chiefly to arise from the soul itself; so *spiritual life* flows from *the union of the Spirit of Christ with the soul*, the Spirit being the first and chief principle of it. For, what the soul is to the human frame, that Christ is, by his Spirit, to the soul.† In this way, through infinite wisdom and mercy, the children of God find all their life, liberty, holiness, perseverance, and peace.

But say some, who understand not these spiritual and experimental truths; "are we then but *mere machines*,

* 2 Cor. viii. 9. comp. with Zech. ix. 9. Luke ix. 58. Phil. ii. 7.

† Witsii *Diss. Epist. ad* Huberum. § 68.

acting

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acting only as we are acted upon, without any proper volition or determination of our own?"

Nobody asks this question in relation to our bodies, in which the principles of action are far more apparent to our senses; and yet surely they cannot be supposed to be greater objects of divine direction than are our souls. We see, we taste, we smell, we feel, we digest our food, or rather our food is digested in us, our blood circulates, our lungs vibrate, and an inscrutible chemistry is momentarily carrying on throughout our frame; and all this confessedly by the action of God, through the medium of material agents, without any appeal to our will, and generally as much without our attention, as the mode of operation is above our knowledge. This is kept up when we sleep, not less than in our waking hours; in abstraction of thought from the ideal world, as in the most intense applications of our faculties to the substances of matter; when we are engaged in a variety of affairs about us, as when we direct our closest reflections immediately upon ourselves. But will any man say, that he has any share in ordering and supporting this wonderful mechanism, or that it is an automaton raised by himself? The divine power ordained the faculty, and gives the consciousness, of *sight:* our wills were not consulted, whether we should have this sense; or, now we have it, whether it shall be affected or not. We *taste* our food; but can we, if we would, reject the organ, by which we taste, or alter the mode of its sensation? We *hear* the sounds about us: but, is not the impression from without, and is not the perception within, entirely independent of our volition? We feel a variety of motions through

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through all our animal frame, not asking our leave or our wisdom to move; some circulating the pleasures of health and strength, and others compelling us to endure the sad reverse: and do we consider ourselves as absolute and unintelligent machines, notwithstanding these impressions of a superior power? or is it rather proper to a senseless machine, than to a living creature, not to be independent of a supreme agent, or not to be capable of resisting his supreme operations? But if, in the faculties of the body, we are thus acted upon, as we undoubtedly are, by the medium or instrumentality of the gross substances about us, as often without and above, as with our consent; and if God perform all this in us and in others, for the final accomplishment of his providential designs:* who can presume to say, that, in the more

* It was a great concession for a man of Abp. *Tillotson's* persuasion, and extorted no doubt by the force of truth, to say, "God is the fountain and original of all power, from whom it is derived and upon whom it depends, and to whom it is perfectly subject and subordinate. He can do all things at once, and in an instant, and with the greatest ease; and no created power can put any difficulty in his way, much less make any effectual resistance; because omnipotence can check, and countermand, and bear down before it all other powers." And again, "The true reason of these things lies much deeper, in the secret providence of Almighty God, who when he pleaseth can so govern and overrule both the understandings and the wills of men, as shall best serve his own wise purpose and design." *Serm. before the King and Queen*, ix. and x. p. p. 12, and 6. *Solomon* says, *the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.* Prov. xxi. 1. If the heart of *kings* be thus in the hand of the Lord, "ruled and governed, disposed and turned, as it seemeth best to his godly wisdom;" it implies most strongly, that no other man's heart can be out of it.

sublime

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sublime and spiritual properties of the mind, which are so much more congenial with himself than matter can be, the same Almighty agent doth not begin, sustain, and carry on those mental impressions and activities, which, under the name of *grace*, constitute the very life, peace, wisdom, strength, experience, and ultimate expectation of the soul? Who can venture to deny, that God is the *Alpha* and *Omega* of his people's faith and salvation, wrought in them and for them; when he himself, who can neither deceive nor be deceived, hath been pleased to affirm, that he is? *How* he doeth this, is another question, which we can no more define than we can define the mode of his operation upon those gross substances our bodies: it is sufficient for us to know, that *it is done*, and that *He* doeth it; or, in other words which are his own, that *in him we live, and move* (or, *are moved*) *and have our being*. Were it otherwise, we could not be a part of his creation, either natural or divine. But will any one presume to say, that all this is making *us*, or the *angels* above us, dull machines, without life or consciousness?

Moreover; his Providence hath established natural means, put them within our natural reach, and given us natural powers to use them. By this Providence, we can read and hear his word; attend his ordinances, and wait at the gates of wisdom. We can be *in the way*, like *Abraham's* servant; and, being there, may expect, with him, that the Lord will *meet us*. Out of the way, we have assurances of nothing but evil.

I have said all this to obviate a common cavil, which, after all, can only be fully answered to a man's mind by the

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the instruction of him, *who worketh* in every believer *both to will and do of his own good pleasure.* When the soul is converted to God, the wisdom and experience, obtained in that conversion, will teach and convince more in one moment, than the ablest human lessons in the world. And, unless such conversion do take place, could the mind be convinced by any arguments or representations, they would be but of little weight or consequence to the person's present peace or conduct, and still less to his everlasting welfare.

God worketh upon his people's souls by his wisdom and truth, which in them are ever accompanied by the energies of his mighty power.* *In the day* or time *of this power, they are made willing*, or willingness itself, in the abstract, as the original implies.† Not by *brutal force* (as some have talked) nor yet by mere *moral suasion* (as others have dreamed;) but by *giving life to the dead*, by *bringing the prisoners out of the prison-house*, by *bestowing sight upon the blind*, and, in a word, by *creating all things new.*

In this *new creation*, there is no bondage, because there is no sin, which is the principle of bondage. So far as a man lives in and partakes of this creation, he is free. In the old creation, the present seat of sin, there is little else but darkness, and slavery, and woe. While we are in the body, we are (as believers) affected by these adverse circumstances. But the more we live in the new creation, so much the more we walk in the *liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free:* the more we are occupied and engrossed by the old creation, so much the more we are

* Eph. 1. 19. † Ps. cx. 3.

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entangled by the yoke of bondage. Being in Christ, who is the head of the new creation, and the author of all liberty; we partake of his *free Spirit*, and become his *freemen.*‡ When we get into the *elements of the world*, we lose this sweet sense of freedom, and hear, if not feel, the rattling chains of our old *Egyptian* servitude. Our spirits sink; and we are taught *the difference* between our master's service, which "is perfect freedom," and the service of him who is at once the king and the slave of slaves.

As our persons are made free by Christ, so are our duties. They are wrought from life, and, according to the degree of grace, with liveliness. They are therefore called, and are, in that true sense, through the merit of Christ and the power of the Divine Spirit, *free-will offerings*, ingenuous and liberal privileges in themselves, and graciously acceptable to the Father of mercies.

We are freed not only from the ruling domination of sin, through the power of the Holy One energizing in us; but also from its fearful *consequences*. Christ hath delivered us from death by dying. He redeemed us from slavery, and for this end (O wonderful method and mystery of mercy!) was sold himself at the *price*, and died the *death*, of a slave. By this, he abolished death itself, and the slavery of sin which leads to it, and made us *free indeed!*—Free, even now, from the condemnation of the law, and free unto holiness, the end of which is everlasting life; and, e'er long, perfectly free from the being of sin and the most distant approaches of evil.

‡ It was an excellent saying for an Heathen; *Deo parere, libertas est*; "It is liberty itself to serve God." SENEC. *de vit. beat.* c. xv.

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When a Christian's body dies, there is an end of death to him, and to all the cause of death, which is sin: from henceforth he can die no more, but lives, yea, being one with Christ, is sweetly involved in the essence of life, which endureth for ever.

O what a precious Saviour is this! how can ye but *love the Lord, ye that be his saints?* how is it possible for you to forget him, who hath done so much for your souls? O seek his face continually; seek his face evermore. In the light of his countenance, there is life—pure, animated, blissful life—and at his right-hand there are joys undefiled and everlasting. Let us prove then our *freedom of access with confidence* unto God, and our deliverance from the hateful bondage of corruption in the world, by living and walking according to his holy will, and by possessing a constant preparation of spirit for departure hence, and for the perpetual fellowship and enjoyment of the Lord and his Christ!

GATHERED.

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GATHERED.

By the fall of *Adam*, the generations descended from him became *wanderers* in every sense; not properly *at home* or in rest, but *scattered*, hither and thither, far from God as from peace, over the face of the earth. From that time there was no immutable settlement for man below; and yet every man by nature is in search of it. For this he traverses the globe, mixes in all companies and affairs, is continually looking round him for another step or removal; but, after all, when he would lie down, finds no easy pillow, where he can safely rest an unquiet and distempered head; no shelter, that can save him from the dread or approach of that fatal storm, which hangs over him all his days, and which at last by falling finishes them. Every thing is (as it were) upon the waves, subject to unceasing agitation and trouble: and his own heart is as disquieted, as all the world about him.

From this *scattered and peeled* state, Christ, who is the great spiritual Asaph or *gatherer*, collects his redeemed *out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.* He *gathers together in one*, and sometimes (in respect of the fewness of their number) *one by one*,* those, who were single or alone,

* Isa. xxvii. 12.

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in the worst sense; *wanderers in a solitary way, finding no city to dwell in.* They are *hungry and thirsty* too in this *wilderness*, and *their soul fainting in them;* till Jesus *leads them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.**

Of this gathering of the people to Christ, and by him and his gracious Spirit, the Scriptures are full.† It was one of the outward signs of this blessed *Shiloh's* appearing, that *to him should the gathering of the people be.*‡ But, in the inward sense, he gathered them, from the very foundation of the world. He always had a people, created and ordained for his praise, as his *first-born* or *heirs* among the nations, as his *first-fruits* and *portion* from a spared world. These he hath ever been gathering *like wheat into his garner;* and when he hath gathered the whole, according to their *appointed times*,§ the chaff and stubble will he burn with unquenchable fire.

He selected the nation of the Jews, by whom he preached this very thing.‖ Their ancients were among an idolatrous heathen; and they themselves were commanded ever to confess, that a *Syrian ready to perish was their father.* The selection was of the Lord's free

* Ps. cvii. 3, &c.

† Isa. xl. 11. xliii. 5. lvi. 8. Jer. xxii. 8. *et al.*

‡ Gen. xlix. 10. § The *times* of God's people are all *in his hand.* There is no such false or foolish principle, as *chance*, with him. It is to be regretted, therefore, that Eccl. ix. 11, is so perversely rendered, as it is. The wise man is showing, that nothing succeeds according to human abilities, but that *the fit season*, and the *concatenation of opportune circumstances* are *put together* (as beams in a building) *for all men;* i. e. by a special and particular providence.

‖ Deut. vii. 6.

choice.

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choice. The motives were all in himself; unless their misery, unrighteousness, weakness, and repugnance, could be thought inducements to his love. They were once not a people; but, by his own power and providence, became the people of the Lord. The selection of the Jews proves, that all was of his own free grace; and the calling of the Gentiles, that not even believers have any claim or right for their own posterity.

Blessed be their Saviour, he doth collect his redeemed from among the heathen; and with loving-kindness and mercy he gathers them. They are by nature amongst the multitude, in no respect differing from others. Equally lost, equally undone and depraved, they neither seek his favour, nor know it. Rather, they oppose it with every corruption of their bodies and souls; till the sceptre of his love, reached out to their very hearts, induces them to feel and acknowledge his kind constraint. This free favour converts and renews the mind, makes the once unwilling to be willingness itself, and, by imparting a spiritual faculty to receive spiritual light, then sweetly "on the sightless eye-ball pours the day." Henceforward, they humbly admire the goodness which could stoop so low, and the mercy which could rescue them so unworthy. "Why am I chosen (will one of these say) and others, not worse than myself, (if so bad) relinquished to perish! why do I taste and rejoice in the loving kindness of the Lord: while some of these, wiser, fairer, and apparently far more respectable, than I am, are permitted to live and die in the state of nature and ruin! —Lord, I can give, and I dare to give, no other account for this, but what my Saviour himself hath been pleased

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to give before me; *even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*—How unsearchable are thy judgements, and thy ways past finding out!"

He not only gathers his people, by his own free choice, but *with his own holy arm.* No power, but that which is almighty, could restore the rebellious, and thus make the very heart of the revolted to be willing.* He changes while he gathers. He not only alters the station or place, but the condition and spirit of his gathered ones. They are brought into the fellowship of his own Spirit, and have his own blessed mind established within them. They are admitted to an indissoluble union with him as their head, and, by that union, have also a vital and heart-felt communion with those that are truly saints, as his members and their own.

What the Lord Christ gathers with so much toil and at so great a price, he keeps with concern and with safety. His gathered therefore are BOUND *in the bundle of life with* JEHOVAH *their* ALEHIM:† the everlasting essence of life is their life, and secures it with his own by a perpetual covenant. This is a *bond,* which shall never be broken. This is a source, which can never fail. The more it is drawn, the fuller and faster it flows.

They are gathered by grace for nothing less than immortal glory. The end of the work is answerable to the design and grandeur of the worker. He acts like himself in a sovereign and almighty way; and he crowns all he does with an unutterable majesty and splendor. *Who is like unto thee, O Lord! thou hast done wonderful things! thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth!*

* Ps. cx. 3. † 1 Sam. xxv. 29.

Their

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Their very dust shall be gathered, however dispersed, when he shall summon the world to judgement. The same power, which created and consequently which marked out and placed every atom in the universe, can with equal ease (speaking after the manner of men) collect them when scattered, and restore them to their pristine situation. He sees and knows and comprehends all the minute and the almost infinitely innumerable particles, combined or distributed through his whole creation, with more accuracy and attention, than the first created intellect in heaven can know or consider any one thing. *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*; nor can any of his creatures either increase or expunge an atom, or even vary its place or use, without his permission.

Fear not, then, thou poor and despised believer, who art prone to think, that thou art so little worthy of the divine attention, and so insignificant in the world, as almost to be forgotten by thy God. Fear not: the gracious ASAPH, the spiritual gatherer of his redeemed, will both seek and search thee out. He knows more of thee, and of thy ways, than thou canst know of thyself, or of them. Thou art an object in his eye more distinguished, than the kings and emperors, as such, of this fallen world. An hair of thine head falleth not to the ground without thy father's knowledge: how much less the least of the concerns of thy precious soul! Use not then the old complaint, *Jehovah hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me*, without acknowledging at the same time the old consolation; *can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her*

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womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee (saith the Lord): *Behold; I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.**

When the great spiritual harvest shall be gathered in, or "the number of God's elect be accomplished;" then shall the end come; and the world, having answered the great design of the builder, like a useless scaffold, shall be taken down for the fuel of destruction. Then shall *the holy city, the new Jerusalem,* (which will in that day be completely in unity with itself) *come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband:* and then shall *the great voice be heard out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.*— Thus hath *the Alpha and Omega said, the beginning and the end,* the leader and the consummator of all things.†

* Isa. xlix. 15, 16. † Rev. xxi. 3—6.

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HEALED.

As CHRIST is the great physician, so his people are, by natural contamination, sick and need to be healed. *Adam* impaired the spiritual, as well as natural, health of his progeny, which nothing but omnipotence could remedy; and therefore omnipotence, clothing itself with the flesh of *Jesus*, hath effectually *interposed.* JEHOVAH *sent his* WORD *and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.*

This lesson was taught in the history of the Jews at *Marah.** Here they found only *bitter water*, of which they could not drink; and when *Moses* cried unto the Lord, the Lord showed [or taught] him a TREE, which being thrown in, sweetened the waters. *There*, at that time, or upon that occasion, he established or placed before them *a statute and a decree* [a rule of instruction from his holy mind and will] *and there he proved them.* This promise was also added, upon the observance of the voice and commandment of the Lord; *I will put none of those diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am* JEHOVAH, *that healeth thee.*

A sublime and spiritual instruction was apparently intended in these words. When believers have entered

* Exod. xv. 23.

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upon their pilgrimage, they find sometimes if not often, for the trial of their faith, the water, the bitter water, of affliction and trouble. Carnal professors murmur at such an event, and look back for relief upon Egypt or the world, with the carnal Jews; but the real Christian, like *Moses*, crieth unto the Lord; and the Lord teacheth him how to use the tree of his appointment, which can *heal all his diseases*, and sweeten his sorrows. This tree is the TREE OF LIFE, which groweth *in the midst* of the heavenly paradise; and its *leaves are for the healing of the nations*.* The Lord Christ is this sacred and medicinal tree; and he, that cometh by faith unto him, in spiritual disease or distress, shall find him the healer of the soul; yielding, as an olive, the oil of his grace; and, as a vine, the wine of his consolation and peace.

A lesson, of the same tendency with that of the waters at *Marah*, was also inculcated by healing the stings of the fiery serpents, sent among the *Israelites*. It was in believing the word of the Lord, and in looking up to the instituted sign of *a serpent of brass*, that they were cured of the poisonous malady, which destroyed *much people* on every side.

Thus the old *serpent of fire* hath bitten us all; first, our progenitor, and, through him, every one of us. As the least particle of poison from a common serpent will presently infect the whole frame to its destruction; so it is not merely the *number* or *quantity* of sin, that poison of the soul, but its *nature*, received within us,

* Gen. ii. 9. with Rev. xxii. 2.

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which has diseased us throughout, and threatens us daily with something worse than the grave. To Christ crucified; to him, who became a curse, as a sin-bearing serpent itself, lifted on high; must we look by faith for the antidote. By faith we receive its virtue, and become healed of our plague. Jesus cures all the malady of sin, by taking it all upon himself. And he *makes an end of sin*, and absorbs its baleful poison, when, individually, he applies his infinite virtue to the believing soul. His cross, which was the instrument of the most accursed death, becomes like the tree of life to the longing eyes of the Christian, and changes the sorrows of his heart, like the bitter waters of *Marah*, into sweetness and delight.

Into all this Christ entered freely and voluntarily. The wounds of the cross, without his own will, had no power to injure or to kill; for, being the Prince of life, he could have healed and sustained himself, as well as others. He cried with a *loud voice*, possessing full strength to live, if he had pleased to live. He first bowed his head, and then died (contrary to the usage of mortals in the same circumstances) as the very Lord and Master of death itself, to whom he submitted without compulsion, because, as the true and availing sacrifice, he was *sponte sua* to lay down his life.

He was the willing substitute for sinners *made willing* to embrace him *in the day of his power*. The wrath of heaven, like the fire upon the typical sacrifices, which were offered up at the first establishment of the tabernacle and temple, fell upon this Lamb of God, who was thereby invested with the curse due to their sins, in their

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their behalf and in their stead. And this perfectly insured their full and free salvation.*

Reader; hath the Lord put bitterness into thy cup, or placed sorrows in the way of thy pilgrimage? Remember this instruction of his word, and by faith apply this tree of life, which yieldeth wisdom and comfort, to the distresses of thine heart. Use this remedy, which hath been tried for ages; and thou shalt find a distillation of more precious balm than that of *Gilead*, for the wounds of sin, or the maladies of life. Look unto him made sin, made disease, made a curse, for thee; and be saved: he invites, he commands, thee thus to look for relief. Nor can he *deny himself*, or be worse than his word. *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.* Cast thy cares, thy whole lot, yea, thy very soul, upon this Lord of truth, this faithful and never-failing God. Try him, as he tries thee. He sends affliction; do thou throw the care of it upon him. He proves thy confidence in him: prove thou his fidelity towards thee. Come with a single eye, and a simple sincere heart, to the throne of his grace: ask for grace, with the holy boldness or liberty of his children, and submit the whole to him for his own glory. Say, with *Jeremiah; Heal me, O Lord, my strength and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; for thou*, thou, even thou, *art my praise.*† Then wait with the patience of faith; and see, if he will not make good his truth,

* See this strikingly illustrated in Lev. ix. 24. 2 Chron. vii. 1. &c. with Isa. liii. 4, 5.

† Jer. xvii. 14. with xvi. 19.

either

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either by causing thy grief to depart, or by enabling thee to bear it. Whatever method he uses, thou shalt find it in the end for his glory, and for thy good: and what else canst thou presume to desire?

Thou art called to a warfare, but not at thy own charge. It is beyond thee to find thyself in courage, wisdom, and support, for so great a concern. Thou wouldest soon deny thy Master with *Peter*, and betray him like *Judas*; if Satan were loosed upon thee, and thou hadst no strength but thine own. *All* Christ's disciples, bold as they were in their professed resolutions to abide by him, and favoured as they had been by his presence, *forsook him and fled* in his last great conflict with the powers of darkness. They were *poor* too, and had almost nothing in the world to lose. And yet it is remarkable, that, at the same time, some *richer* disciples, who were such *secretly* before *for fear of the Jews*, now had grace given them to step forward boldly, to own their crucified Lord, to demand his dead body, and to show their love by anointing it with the richest ointments and spices. All which demonstrates, that the poor cannot confess Christ, merely because they have nothing to part with for his sake; nor the rich, because they have nothing to gain by him in the world; but that Christians, in all conditions of life, have only constancy and courage, at any time, or for any occasion, but as they derive it from him. The poor left him by himself to suffer, and the rich had not power to exert their interest either to prevent or to soften his sufferings; for these were absolutely needful for the salvation of both: and yet providence honored the last, being eminent and conspicuous members

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members of the Sanhedrim, with the care of his person and burial, that it might the more evidently appear that he *both died and rose again*, and that all the scriptures, foretelling precisely these circumstances, were perfectly accomplished in him.

Believer; lay up these things in thine heart, and trust in the Lord at all times; for he is thine only refuge, and thine only help, in the time of need: and *verily thou shalt not be disappointed of thine hope.*

EED.

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FED.

THERE are many emblems, used in the scripture, to express the entire as well as certain dependence of the children of God for all their support and nourishment from him. Among others, it is a very principal one, which was made manifest to the *Israelites*, in their daily food the *manna*, while they passed through the wilderness. This was prophetically styled *bread of heaven, bread of the mighty*:* and the apostle calls it, *spiritual meat* † or food, that is, food having a spiritual signification. This signification our Lord himself explains. *The bread of God is he, which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.—I am* THE BREAD OF LIFE.‡ In saying this, he affirms his divinity; for Jehovah only is and can be the nourisher of life: and this *Moses* sufficiently indicates under that sign of Christ the outward manna; JEHOVAH *fed thee with manna, that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but* [על כל מצא פי יהוה] *upon the whole which proceedeth from the mouth of* Jehovah [which is translated in the New Testament by, παν ῥημα, κ. τ. λ. *by every word*, or *the whole word*, &c.] *doth man live.*§ Christ is that WORD, that *power*, that *life*, that *bread*,

* Ps. lxxviii. 24, 25. אבירים. † 1 Cor. x. 3.
‡ John vi. 33, 35.
§ Deut. viii. 3. Mat. iv. 4.

which

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which *cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.—If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.—The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life;** i. e. because his divine life and power are in them.

The people of God are as miraculously fed now, as ever they were of old. Christ is their spiritual life; and he nourishes the life, which he imparts, from day to day. He gives himself freely from above, as the *manna* also came freely down from the sky. They look up to him, and expect him; and they are not disappointed of their hope. He supplies all their need, spiritual and temporal; and makes every thing work together for their good. They live not by outward bread only, or any other natural means of life; but by all which springeth forth, in every instance of providence or grace, from him, who is the life of their souls. When they hunger most for him, as is the case of hunger in natural health, they are in the best and soundest condition; and he readily fills every hungry soul with his goodness. From day to day do they look up and ask for this their *daily bread*, without whose support their strength and hope must fail; but by whose nourishment, they are strong and lively in the ways of salvation, and ready for every good word and work. *They can then do all things through* this living bread, *which strengtheneth them.*

Appearances may be and often are against them, as they were to the outward sense of the *Israelites* in passing forty years through a dreary and miserable wilderness; but, as their bread did not fail and as their waters were sure, so is the case now with every one of God's people,

* John vi. 63.

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in their pilgrimage through the world. His eye is ever upon them: his hand is ready to help them: and no enemy can overwhelm them. They may be and must be in straits and difficulties at times; but these are for proof and trial of faith, and not for destruction. When the Lord interposes in these, and discovers his particular goodness; then the believer should observe the token, should fix in his mind a memorial, a spiritual *Ebenezer*, and should say with thankfulness, "In this case also hath the Lord helped me; and this present token for good O may I remember in future difficulties, and by faith pray for and find the same deliverance." *The Lord* indeed *is not slack concerning his promise*, though we may be *slow of heart to believe it*. There is not an individual moment in a believer's life, which is not considered and provided for by him. Our ignorance, or want of spiritual sight, is no bar to his wisdom, nor bound to his providence; but he is carrying on the great design of our salvation, as much in the stormy rain of affliction, which may pierce and render us uncomfortable in ourselves, as in the sun-shine of prosperity, when all things appear gay and chearful. He is not to be understood by our gross feelings, which have often too much of earth and sensuality in them, but by his own faithfulness and truth, which cannot alter, nor even be suspended for a moment. May we then use the words of *Habakkuk* in the faith of *Habakkuk: Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation!*

GOD's

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GOD's HUSBANDRY.

NATURE, or the visible and material world, beautifully accords in testimony with the declarations of grace; nor is this at all surprising, when we consider, that HE, who created the *works*, gave forth the *word*, and that all things were made *by* the GREAT REDEEMER, and *for* him. The natural objects are, therefore, frequently appealed to in the Scriptures, as illustrations, as symbols, as sensible proofs, of the production and progression of those spiritual acts, which the Lord exhibits in or for his people, in order to perfect their salvation. He that reads nature with an evangelic or spiritual eye, views it encompassed with rays of glory and goodness, which the sensualist and the worldling are so far from understanding, that they really have not the least conception of them. Though all the works of God, therefore, in various respects, show forth his praise: yet *his saints*, and his saints only, can, with gratitude of spirit, *bless him* for them; because they only can *speak of the glorious majesty of his kingdom*, and *talk of his power*. They have felt this power of their Lord and Father in their hearts; and their mouths are opened by him to celebrate his goodness and his truth.

Under this term HUSBANDRY, the Spirit of God discovers to us another representation of his holy agency upon

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upon the souls of men: and the more able we are to examine it, the more striking and beautiful will this representation appears to us.

Husbandry among men is distributed into several species or kinds. We have the husbandry of the *field* or *farm*, of the *garden*, of the *vineyard* and the *plantation*. These all require, according to their peculiar circumstances, the constant culture and superintendence of human industry; or they would produce nothing, or nothing of utility.

We know, likewise, that the most cultivated field or garden, the most fertile vineyard, and most beautiful plantation, were originally a rude and desolate common, a melancholy and unproductive wilderness, the rage only of savage and devouring beasts, or of men perhaps more wild and savage than they. It was science and industry, through providence, which changed these gloomy circumstances into their present condition of use and beauty, and made regions, which were almost a picture of the valley of the shadow of death, to become the chearful haunts of domestic and useful creatures, and of social and civilized men.

We are also sensible, from constant experience, that the most fertile field or vineyard, the most enchanting garden or plantation, *let alone* and permitted to remain without culture and skill, soon returns to its savage state of nature, and would bear nothing but contemptible fruits and noxious weeds.

All this is the expressive picture of *redeemed men*. The Lord *found his people* in a *desert land*, and in the *waste howling wilderness*. Yea, *Zion* itself was once a wilderness;

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a part of the desolate waste, and undistinguishable from it; till the great Husbandman marked out her lines, raised up her fences, and thereby divided, sanctified, or set her apart for himself, from all the miserable soil laying round about her. This was a selection, according to his own plan or will; according to the mere spontaneous exertion of his own almighty power. The people of God could no more have appointed or rescued themselves from the common wretchedness of the world, than a garden or field could have chosen its own peculiar situation, or wrought itself up into fruitfulness and beauty. The natural truth is undeniable and obvious; and what that natural truth preaches, is equally so, both in the word of God, in continual fact, and in the uniform experience of his redeemed. They sought not him, but he *sought out* (agreeable to the *name* he has given them, in Isa. lxii. 12.) and gave unto them the *bounds of their habitation* and turned the desert place into his spiritual inclosure or garden. They only became a part of his HUSBANDRY, *because it pleased him* to make them such; and no other reason can they or do they desire to give; and no other does his holy revelation afford, of this gracious and wonderful matter. They look upon every attempt to be wiser than this, as a presumption, which God hath already condemned for its folly, and will hereafter cover with shame.

As this spiritual field, garden, vineyard, or plantation, is selected and inclosed by JEHOVAH; so is it defended, arranged, supplied, weeded, and fertilized, by him. His eye is ever upon it. It is the constant work of his hand. He *waters it every moment.* He guards it from Satan, the *wild*

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wild boar of the wood. He both prunes and gives sap to all the branches, that they may bring forth more fruit, and more and better fruit. And he finally gathers the corn into his garner, and his ripe and pleasant fruits to his home.

Were the Lord to leave this his husbandry alone to itself; it would, like the husbandry in nature, soon produce nothing but weeds and thorns: the inclosures would be broken down, and the whole run into wilderness again. But the great Husbandman is ever breaking up some *fallow ground, repairing* some spiritual *breaches,* taking away some injurious weeds, introducing some useful plants, nourishing some tender herbs or trees, preparing manure for some needy ground, securing some weak or falling branches, and, in a word, watching over the whole with an all-seeing eye, and providing for the whole with an unremitting hand. O what loving-kindness and mercy are here exhibited for this once barren and desolate field! And how precious, how eternally precious, is it become to the Lord of life and glory, since he was pleased to set his love upon it, and to live and walk therein!—It is indeed *his portion;* he calls it so; and *the lot of his inheritance,* which he hath procured for himself; and who shall take it away from him?

In this spiritual field or garden, there is undoubtedly, as in the natural, a great variety of plants, and a great difference in size, in use, in fruitfulness, and in beauty; but still they are all good for something: all have a certain produce, according to this Husbandman's design; from him entirely their fruit, or their virtue, is found; all are the precious objects of his delight, and speak out

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his power and praise. Every leaf receives his air or spirit, for transpiration and life: every flower reflects one or more of the various rays of his beaming and overspreading light: every fruit is nourished and sweetened, by his genial and attempered heat. All that lives and grows in this garden, as well as the garden itself, is from the fostering production of his hand, and the determining attention of his eye.

When the Lord causes a plant or tree to spring up in his garden, it is usually at first very small and tender, and requires particular care and defence. He, therefore, bestows it; and waits, with much kindness and patience, over the whole progression, till it hath answered his original design, and is ripe unto perfection. He does not permit the pestilent weeds of sin to contaminate or stifle it; nor even (what would sometimes be the case) some greater and more advanced plant to overgrow and hurt it; but he transplants it when necessary, or makes room for its increase, according to his own purpose, or the proper occasion and place allotted to it.

As his air, or spirit, gives life, and maintains life in every plant of his field or garden; so his light of righteousness, freely shining, covers every leaf and every flower with his gracious splendor. According to the just remark of a learned and ingenious author; "There is one very considerable circumstance, common to the clothing of a flower and to the righteousness signified by it—that both are equally the *work* or *gift* of God. It is *God* that clothes the grass of the field with such beauty; and it is God that giveth to his people the far more lasting ornaments of grace and sanctification. Man, with

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with his utmost skill, can never weave such delicate embroidery, as we find in one single leaf of an ordinary flower; and no works or merits of man, with all his *toil* and *spinning*, can compose that *robe of righteousness*, without which we must not hope to appear in the presence of God."* All is of free grace and unmerited bounty, from beginning to end; and all is complete, because it is the energy of HIM, *whose work is*, unimpeachably, *perfect*.

The maturity and worth of the fruit too are all his own. His gracious heat perfects the life and sweetness, of what his air and light maintain and beautify. The productions may differ in size, or excellence, or utility: but the difference is ordained by him, who best knows the end for which he made the whole and every part. The sanctification, as well as the justification, of his people, is entirely, by himself, through his Spirit: it is all his own workmanship; his own husbandry: and he, who hath told us this, hath also told us, that it is all for his own glory. Here then,

Where reason fails with all her pow'rs,
True *faith prevails, and love adores.*

Though there are undoubtedly great differences in the kinds of trees and plants, not only in the natural but also in this spiritual garden; yet the stateliest cedars and the lowliest shrubs are respectively arranged in their proper places, by the Great Husbandman, throughout the whole plantation. On account of the eminence of these cedars, both

* Jones's *free inquiry into the signification of the* Spring. p. 14.

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both as to their own *growth* and local *situation*, the church, in the Old Testament, was frequently denoted by the name of *Lebanon*; the mountain, on which they remarkably grew. Thus *Moses* prayed to God; *Let me see that goodly mountain, and Lebanon*;* meaning the high and full establishment of the church. So *David* describes the chosen people; *the trees of the Lord are full of sap, the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted.*† What this sap, and this Lebanon, mean, may be seen in other places. *I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord.*‡—*The people, which thou hast purchased —Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance; in the place,* O LORD, *which thou hast made for thee to dwell in* [מכון לשבתך the place peculiar or appointed for thy rest,] *in the sanctuary,* O LORD, *which thy hands have established.*§ Thus, the

* Deut. iii. 25. † Ps. civ. 16.

‡ Jer. xxxi. 14. § Exod. xv. 17. with Heb. iv 9. Jer. xvii. 12. John xiv. 2. All the names given to the REST, *which remaineth for the people of God*, are calculated to lead up our thoughts from the earth, and to make us recollect that we should walk as *strangers and pilgrims* upon it. Thus, it is named מרום, *the height*; to distinguish it from our present grovelling situation: מקום, or מכון, *a place, peculiar or established*; because, out of it, there is nothing but an unsettled void, or *outer darkness*, from guilty spirits and guilty men: מקדש, a *sanctuary*, a *separation* of existence from all impurity, where God vouchsafes his immediate presence: שבת, *a rest* or *sabbath*, because here only can men find peace to their souls, and a rest from all the labors or sorrows occasioned by sin. It is also called a *tabernacle*, a *shelter*, a *hiding-place*, a *temple*, a *city*, a *mountain*, and by other significant names; in order to deduce, where our true *home*, our only *secure* and *eternal abode*, is; and that, in aspiring

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nutrition of these spiritual trees appears to be wholly from the Lord; and their final destination, under the type of this mountain of cedars, to be the everlasting mountain of God's holiness, or heaven. There are many texts, which thus figuratively make use of *Lebanon*, so called from its *whiteness*, the *snow* almost always remaining upon it: and this whiteness, again, hath been symbolically applied to the people of God, as denoting their *purity* through the forgiveness of their sins. Thus, *though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow —Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.* In a word, this figure of *Lebanon* and its *cedars*, hath been aptly and graciously used, by the Holy Spirit, for the sake of the *Israelites* especially under the Old Testament, by whom, as a circumstance close at their doors, it was well understood, and by them and all other believers must be known to signify, the spotless purity bestowed upon God's chosen people, their present superiority of life and affections to the world, and their future eminence in the state of glory.

But though *the trees of the Lord's planting*, when compared one with another, are not all cedars, yet they are all equally his own trees; and the lowest and the meanest, to man's eye, may be the most useful and most fruitful. The towering plants may resemble those of the Lord's people, who appear high in the temporal church, through their peculiar situation, their superior

aspiring to this grand perfection of our being and place of our rest, we should learn to hold, in their proper value, all things here below in our way to it, and at a cheap rate especially all that would hinder or keep us from it.

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talents, or some speculative sublimity of mind. But persons of this sort, as experience shows, are, however ornamental and pleasing they may seem to the eye of sense, not always so productive of goodness or spiritual utility, as some others, who may have a less aspiring growth and aim to flourish nearer to the ground. The helpless vine, which cannot rise at all without a prop, bears something *to make glad the heart*, which is looked for in vain from the oak, the cedar, or the fir. These indeed may be made instruments of aid to its feeble branches, and thereby give a lesson of the mutual assistance which should be found among Christians; but, in real value, however superior in appearance, they are much beneath this humble tree, as well as many other fruit-bearing shrubs, which feebly, or rarely, rise above the soil. Analogous to this natural fact, we may sometimes see a few Christians, scattered here and there on the earth, who are low in intellectual attainments, void of every talent which can attract or captivate others, humble in life, little in profession, who think meanly of themselves, and perhaps are thought nothing of by others; but who are *rich* and *strong in faith*, abstracted in spirit from the world, simple in their views and affections towards Christ, heartily devoted and desirous to be wholly resigned to his will, and bringing forth the sweetest fruits of grace, in much meekness, patience, and genuine humility, to his glory. Now, though such as these do certainly make but a mean figure in the world, and perhaps no great show among real Christians themselves; yet, praised be the free grace of the most High, each of these may confidently say, with the prophet;

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prophet; *Surely, my judgement is with the Lord, and my work with my God.** Or if, according to *Jotham*'s parable a superiority of rank or consideration were proposed to one of these small and lovely vines, it might well answer; *Should I leave my wine, which cheareth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?*† It would be no gainer by the exchange. Perhaps, a loser; for the higher the station, the more exposed it is, as well in the church as in the world. To gain credit among mortals, at the expence of spiritual pursuits or spiritual peace, would be but a poor business at the best, and probably would lead to a sorry account at the last. Let the humble believer, then, rejoice in his mean condition and frames more than in any aspiring thoughts; always remembering, WHO it is that hath said, *He that walketh humbly, walketh surely.* He is perhaps preserved in this way from a multitude of dangerous temptations, which men of another disposition or station are continually exposed to, and will never regret in the end the lowliness of his walk or mind, since, possibly, he might otherwise have had occasion (as some have had) for many and grievous perturbations. However, respecting all circumstances of time or temporal acquirements, every wise and gracious heart will have been taught, that God hath appointed to each believer his own place and talents, that these are the best for him that he could possibly have, and that by these, whatever they may be, it is his happiness and duty to honor God and to profit men.

Let the oak, then, be satisfied with the firmness,

* Isa. xlix. 4. † Judg. ix. 13.

which

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which God hath bestowed upon it; the cedar, with its wide-spreading branches, and height; the fir, with its beautiful growth; the palm, with its rising vigor against oppression; and all the other trees of the wood or plantation, with their respective stateliness or figure; but let the vine, creeping as it grows, rejoice too in the hand, which hath created its delicious fruit; the rose be thankful for its fragrant bloom; and every humbler tree and shrub, for each peculiar production, which the Lord hath assigned; for they can *suitably* bear no other, and, in bearing this, they exhibit his munificence and praise. As the diversity and arrangement of plants, with their various fruits, figures, and foliage, crown the whole scene with beauty, and give a rich accordance or enlivening contrast to each other, filling the eye and the heart with food and gladness; so should believers, live, and help, and beautify, each other; ever remembering, that they all together form one harmonious temple, which is *God's building*, and one well-disposed garden, which is *God's husbandry*.

Lastly. *It is God's right hand, which hath planted his vineyard, and made* THE BRANCH, the principal Branch [בן, the SON of his love,] *strong for himself.**—This grand truth yields the most charming consolation to the people of God. The foundation of their most lasting hope is laid in the faithful *omnipotence* of JEHOVAH, who hath raised up CHRIST as the HEAD *over all things to his church*, and taken his human nature into that FULNESS, *which filleth all in all.* Of course, all things

* Ps. lxxx. 15. with verse 17.

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promised in the covenant and word of the Most High, and performed or purchased by the Redeem , are secured to EVERY ONE, of every age, profession, or nation, that are and shall be *found in him.* The whole multitude of infants from the beginning of the world, with an immense number of souls, who had not the ordinary means of grace, but whom grace secretly quickened amidst the obscurities of dark times or of erroneous professions, and among people too not greater idolaters to sin and the world than the vast bulk of those now usually called Christians; probably these, and thousands and tens of thousands of other *hidden ones,* shall find their place in the Lord's spiritual *Eden,* through the Redeemer's merits, and join the more known and more perfectly instructed believers, *in giving thanks for the operation of his hands.* Certainly, all that are saved, of every age and every tongue, shall agree, without one dissenting voice, to ascribe their salvation, with *blessing and honor, and glory, and power, unto* HIM *that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the* LAMB *for ever and ever.* They will uniformly rejoice to acknowledge, that their redemption was to them most gratuitously free, that the whole design of it was planned by the TRIUNE JEHOVAH, that the whole preparation was by the blood and righteousness of the GOD-MAN, and the whole accomplishment by the power of GOD THE SPIRIT. This will be their united confession of praise: and their praise, as well as the cause of it, never shall end.

See, then, my fellow Christian, thy privilege and thy portion. Thou art *a tree of the Lord's planting, that he may be glorified,* and that thou mightest bear fruit here

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here, and be blessed hereafter. His church is his garden this garden is enclosed, inaccessibly enclosed, against the powers of evil; thou, even thou, art in it; nor shalt thou ever be removed from thine appointed portion. God *will not* take thee from it; and the creature, *cannot*.

It is at once thy duty and thine interest, then, to bring forth fruit, and much fruit to his praise; and it is thy comfort to be assured by the Lord of the vineyard, that thy *fruit shall remain*, and that not the least *fragment* of his goodness, bestowed upon thee, or wrought in thee, shall ever be *last*. Thou wert taken out of the waste by *his own will and by the word of truth*,* though nothing better in thyself than the rest of the plants around thee. The selection, O remember it with gratitude, was not in *thee*, but in *him*.† If he had not loved thee before all time, he could not afterwards have set his heart upon thee; for from an infant thou wert before him a sinner both in nature and practice, and hadst not one good or inviting disposition towards him. Yea, before thou wert born, guilt was upon thee; for, with the Psalmist, thou mayest say, *behold*, mark it well, *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* Again, *Thine eyes* (O Lord) *did see my substance yet being imperfect, and in thy book* [the book and covenant of life] *all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.* He *loved thee*, indeed, before all time, *with an everlasting love, and* THEREFORE it was, *that with loving kindness he hath drawn thee,*

* James i. 18. † John xv. 16.

He,

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He, and he only, drew thee out of thy former miserable state, and established thee in his vineyard, his plantation, his field, his garden: and as to all thy *sins*, they shall be as *none; they shall not be found;* for the LORD hath expressly said, *I will pardon them whom I reserve.** O seek, then, to show, how truly thou belongest to him, by thy love towards himself, by thy likeness in temper and conduct to thy Saviour's holy pattern, by care and affection to the persons and things which belong to him, and by patience and benevolence in general towards all others about thee. Convince the opposers of that free grace and mercy which thou hast tasted, that the firm belief of thy heavenly Father's particular mercy, doth not spring from pride of heart in thyself, or from sourness of disposition towards other men (as they are fond to suppose;) but from the sweetest submission and obedience to his will and word, and from the most humbling conviction of thy own turpitude and unworthiness. Let thy forbearance, meekness, and good-will demonstrate, whom and what it is thou art striving to follow, and that thou art ready to join in heart, as well as in tongue, the noble confession of that *blessed seed*, who sang; *Not unto us*, O LORD, *not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.*

With respect to thy brethren in the world, thou wilt have many, and perhaps constant, calls upon thy heart, for that *charity, which suffereth long and is kind; which envieth not; which vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,*

* Jer. l. 20.

doth

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doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; which beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Many of the children of God are unskilful children in the word and way of righteousness, and, through natural infirmity, do often fall into petulance or frowardness. But, if thou art a *young man*, or a *father, in Christ;* wilt thou strike them, as it were, with a club; or wilt thou not rather use thy superior wisdom and strength, to set them right in the course of their holy profession? And if thou canst not accomplish this, through their obstinacy or their ignorance; yet, thou canst leave them with mildness to their Father and thine, and canst put up many a kind petition in their behalf. These may possibly be heard for *them;* but, at all events, shall certainly not be forgotten for *thee.* If thy prayer be heard, thou gainest thy brethren; or, if not, thou wilt find an increasing faith and patience for thine own soul.

Blessed be God! soon shall these disturbances and infirmities cease, and his holy name be magnified, by all his redeemed, in the fullest harmony and most perfect love. Then, if regret can enter heaven, many of the faithful will look back with concern upon the petty feuds and debates, which divided them here, and will rejoice to embrace those, with the tenderest affection, whom perhaps they could scarcely endure to meet, or at least could not think well of below. Their differences will then be all at an end, and buried (as they deserve) in everlasting oblivion. Filial love to God in Christ, and fraternal love to each other, will give a perfect emphasis to

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to their united bliss, will heighten the sweet melody of the heavenly choir, and fill every saint and every spirit with the sublimest joy. O happy consummation of the being of the redeemed! how delightful to anticipate this in faithful expectation! But how much more delightful, to possess and know!—Thanks be to God; the hour shall shortly come, when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall be clothed with immortality; when every believing eye shall see the glorious JESUS *as he is*, and when every *Christian indeed* shall be for ever *like unto him.*

O blissful dawn of endless day,
When sin shall cease and death shall die;
When CHRIST his glory shall display
And beam upon my longing eye.

Then, then, my God, this soul of mine,
Bought, dearly bought, and made thine own,
In thy bright righteousness shall shine,
And claim a portion near thy throne.

Then, rapt in everlasting joy,
Midst heav'n's innumerable throng,
Thy love shall all my pow'rs employ,
And be the theme of ev'ry song.

WATERED.

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WATERED.

This term, like the preceding, implies the continual *nourishment* and *sustenance*, derived to the church, from him who is the supporter and head of it. He himself is the bread of life; and from him flows the water of life, or the Holy Spirit, which saturates and replenishes the soul.

The application of water to *washing* or *purification* relates to another act of the divine agency in believers: and, though all the effects proper to salvation are inseparable from each other, and must more or less be found in one and the same subject; yet they may and ought to be considered distinctly for our better comprehension; and therefore this idea of *sanctification*, under the image of *cleansing water*, will be found treated of under another name.

When *Israel* came out of *Egypt*, they travelled three days into the wilderness, and found no water. They afterwards came to the *bitter waters*, which were miraculously made sweet; and from thence to twelve wells of water at *Elim*, where also were seventy palm trees. After leaving these in their progress, they were supplied with *manna* from above, and then again were fainting and falling under the want of water in *Rephidim*. Here they tried the Lord and his truth, who relieved them with

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with water out of the stony rock, which followed them afterwards; and therefore the name of the place was called *Massah* or *Temptation*, and *Meribah* or *Strife*.* When the Lord brought them forth out of *Egypt*, he did not immediately bring them into the land of promise, but led them *through a great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water*—that he might *humble* them, and *prove* them, and *do them good at their latter end*; and that they might not presume to say, that *their power and the might of their hand had gotten them their wealth*.† All these things tried them indeed, as we may read in the history of this prophetic event; and those, who had no faith, left their carcases in the wilderness, and entered not into rest. Their enemies, doubtless, who observed them through their course, and who heard, it appears, of their destination, jeered at their apparent distress,‡ at the strange and to them unaccountable march of the people hither and thither so contrary to the ordinary methods of human reason and resolution, and at the very tedious progression of so many years for the accomplishment of a purpose, which might have been obtained in less than so many days. All this was matter of severe probation on one side, and of surprise or derision on the other.

But this was also prophetic or descriptive of the spiritual progression of the church of God through the world, which is a wilderness between them and their heavenly *Canaan*: and a terrible wilderness it frequently is, and hath been, to the strangers and passengers through it.

* Exod. xvii. 7. † Deut. viii. 15, &c. ‡ Exod. xiv. 3.

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When these have been rescued from the spiritual *Egypt* and *Pharaoh*, from the bondage of corruption and slavery of the prince of darkness; though at first they are enabled to rejoice in the sense of their deliverance, their faith is afterwards to be tried; and full proof is frequently to be made, that it is a true faith, and that all the *deeds* of it *are wrought in God*. Under this trial, the mere professor sinks. Like the faithless among the *Israelites*, he is for returning again into *Egypt*; and recollects his former *flesh-pots*, and his *bread to the full*.* Like *Esau*, he prefers a *morsel of meat* to the blessing and the birthright of God's children.

The real Christian is annoyed with thirst after happiness, as well as others, in this dreary world; but he thirsteth for it in God, and seeketh for the happiness which cometh from him. His language is, *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.*† And the Lord supplies his thirst in due time. He may cause him to wait, but he shall not want. When his faith holds the faster for the trial and under it, then comes either fit relief or more strength; and then the bitterness itself is turned into sweetness and joy. He leadeth them *beside the still waters*, affording the calmness of peace; or to living *fountains of living waters*, yielding life and abundant replenishment; or he *turneth the flint* itself *into a fountain of water* for unexpected relief. Christ appears as the smitten rock, pouring forth a flood of consolation and support, which follows his people through the wilderness. The *fiery*

* Exod. xvi. 3. † Psalm lxiii. 1.

serpents,

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serpents, the *scorpions*, and the *drought*, shall not hurt them, nor *any* other *deadly thing*; but they are *kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*. The valley of *Baca* itself, the valley of *humiliating perplexities*, which they pass through below, shall become a *well* of refreshment; while the *rain* of heaven *filleth the pools*,* and pours in abundant satisfaction from God. *They go from strength to strength; every one of them appeareth before God in Zion*. Their lowness of circumstances, their out-of-the way course, so different from that of other men, the various and trying providences they meet with in the world, and a thousand other things which seem to mark them out rather as the children of misery than of mercy; excite the scoff, the contempt, the detestation, or the persecution, of the rest of mankind. These deride their *walking by faith and not by sight*; that is, their living in confidence upon the truth and faithfulness of God to his word, instead of depending upon their own reason and strength. They jeer at their trusting God *in the dark*, and at *casting their* whole *burden upon the Lord*. Their reason (and what is so great or convincing to them as *their reason?*) teaches them to ground all upon *seen* principles, and to draw all from what bears a self-evident or tangible demonstration to their *fleshly mind*; and therefore nothing, in their opinion, can be so incomprehensibly stupid, or so enthusiastically presumptuous, as the rushing on upon no other security than a naked promise, and the giving up the delights of sense, and what all men agree to call fair and great and good, for the expectation of an inheritance

* Psalm lxxxiv. 6.

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in a future world, unseen, unknown, and (from the very description given of it) altogether unlike to the present. But these things, and many others which worldly men know not of, the children of God must be content to bear, and must continue to bear too, with faith and patience, to their journey's end. Then every difficulty shall be removed, every mystery solved, and the whole work of grace and providence in them and for them appear fair and good; yea, the very best that could have been for their security and welfare.

Thus God's church, as a *people*, are watered and refreshed: and they are also thus nourished and supported, under the idea of a *vineyard*, a *field*, or a *garden*; according to our former considerations of those terms. In the mean time, we may reflect, and with thankful joy, at the prospect before us. 'Tis true, we have an unpromising wilderness to go through, and many disagreeable things to encounter in it; but the perspective glass of faith can carry the mental eye beyond them all, and give a view, such as *Moses* had from *Pisgah*, of the beautiful scene beyond. The dark shades in front of the picture only serve in truth to heighten the brightness of the lights in the back-ground. Nor should *the way*, or length of the way, *discourage* us,* nor its present inexplicable course; for we should remember, that *God is our guide*, that *his eye is ever upon us*, that his almighty *hand is under us*, that he is our *provider* upon the road, and that he leads us both safely for our souls, and as softly and sweetly as may be, consistently with our watchfulness and final success. He doth not propose to give us uninterrupted rest in such a

* Numb. xxi. 4.

country

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country as this; but he will amply afford it at the close of our journey, and in his own dwelling, beyond the reach of an enemy or distress. Our present business is, to walk on and to press forward, trusting in him for all things, using the lawful means he may put into our power, and then leaving all with resignation to his management and controul. We shall find, that, in this blessed life and walk of faith, we shall get abundantly from him; that he will never leave us to ourselves, nor forsake us to our enemies; that he will *water us every moment*, and supply us constantly with good; and that, though we may seem to *wander in the wilderness in a solitary way*, yet we shall find that sweet promise very sure; *I will bring the blind by a way that they know not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight: these things will I do unto them, and not forsake them,** saith the LORD.

Let us remember then the sacred address to two sorts of persons:—To those, who have faith, and therefore fear and obey the Lord; and to others, who reject his counsels and walk by the light of their own understanding. 1. *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.* 2. *Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.*†

* Isa. xlii. 16. † Isa. l. 10, 11.

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WITNESSES.

THE *testimony of* JESUS, *is the spirit of prophecy: it is* the very spirit and design of all divine revelation, and implies the energy and demonstration of the HOLY SPIRIT, by whom it is imparted.

And, as *the thing testified* is sanctioned by God the Holy Ghost; so he hath raised up, from age to age, subordinate agents, as *personal witnesses* to the truth revealed, who should be competent to give a faithful testimony, by knowing, experiencing, enjoying, *the thing testified.* All their *spiritual senses are exercised* for this purpose. They have *tasted, that the Lord is gracious;* they have *heard,* and *seen with their eyes,* that truth or life which was from the beginning; they have been enabled to *look upon* it with the fullest consideration; and *their* spiritual *hands have handled of the word of life,* so as to examine it on all sides, and thereby *feel* the most convincing proof, that the things are true and real, which God hath testified and which his word records.* And

* This is, for the most part, the scope and design of the book called *the Proverbs,* or, as the original word means, *the parables,* or *similitudes*; which, under moral ideas and natural objects, relate to the knowledge and experience of the children of God in their passage though the world. Thus, in its proem, *to know* WISDOM *and instruction, and to perceive the words of* UNDERSTANDING, is, in New Testament language, *to experience* CHRIST *and his discipline*

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in the main points of their testimony, in that which constitutes the essence or substance of it, all these witnesses for God *have fellowship* and do witness with God, in one uniform temper of mind, and in one admirable consent of tongue. Whatever they may differ about in other respects, in ONE THING they are universally agreed, that all their salvation proceeds solely and freely from JESUS CHRIST, through the love and power of the FATHER and HOLY SPIRIT; and that the whole glory of it, both here and hereafter, must be ascribed to this triune JEHOVAH alone.

Thus, the children of God witness for him in *doctrine*, or *principle*. They hold all the grand truths of his

or way of salvation, and *to spread before the eyes* of the mind *the words*, or revelation, *of the* HOLY SPIRIT. And so further; *to receive* into the heart *the discipline of* spiritual *understanding, righteousness, and the decree* or counsel of God, *and* his *ordinances*. *To give* spiritual *skill to the simple, to the young man* in Christ *experience and discernment*. Thus, *one made wise*, or who hath *tasted* that the Lord is gracious, *will hear* indeed *and gather* spiritual *learning*, and *one of* true *understanding*, taught by the Spirit, shall possess *the gracious pledges*, or *wise counsels* to *spread out* or *discover* the hidden sense of a *parable, and* its *sweet eloquence; the words of the wise, and their enigmatical representations*.—According to the plan of this excellent book, Christ is to be understood generally by *wisdom*, and the Holy Spirit by *understanding*: and they are put in opposition to *the stranger*, or evil spirit, in *the strange woman*, i. e. in the world and the flesh; whose object is *enticement* to sin, and whose *end* is death and hell. Prov. i. 2—6. and vii. 21. 27. The nine first chapters of the book particularly, if read in this point of view, both illustrate and harmonize with the doctrines and experience laid down in the New Testament, and show, that the children of God have received the same mind and heart-felt enjoyment of divine things, as well before the coming of Christ as afterwards.

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revelation, without daring to pervert them by corrupt reasonings and carnal speculations. *What their heavenly Father hath said, must be true;* is to them an incontrovertible axiom. They see all the blasphemy and impudence of the devil in every attempt to question it. The WHY and the WHEREFORE they implicitly and meekly leave to their blessed Lord; being assured, that HE, who is all goodness and wisdom, can say nothing but truth, and do nothing but right. And in this lowly way, he teacheth them, far above the skill of man, such delightful realities in his word of grace, that, according to his promise, they KNOW *of the doctrine that it is indeed of God,* and *can be* of no other; and, in thus knowing it, they receive the blessed *pledge* of an unalienable portion in all they know.

They have, therefore, power to witness for God in their real *experience.* Their's is not the testimony of a fine-spun theory, excogitated by a shallow and doubting reason; but the assurance of a matter of *fact,* of a thing *done for them* and *done in them,* which they as perceptibly know and enjoy, as their outward senses can know and enjoy the light and warmth of the sun, shining with meridian splendor through an unclouded sky. And this vital experience cannot be a delusion, or matter of doubt, like the metaphysical reveries of men; because God hath stated the very nature and manner of it in his word, and at the same time promised to confirm it to his believing people by his Spirit. Christians of all ages, of different languages, and of various countries, have known the same thing in the same way, and have substantially agreed in their evidence concerning them. So that

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that, to suppose an error here, is both to accuse God of falshood, and to impute an unprofitable deceit to his whole people from the beginning of the world; though, these, of all men, have most abhorred deceit, and, in a striking distinction above all, have been called upon, to attest, and even to die, for the truth. Thus, *he that believeth, hath the witness in himself;* and, also, *hath set to his seal, that God is true.*

And, as they own the love and truth of God in their happy experience, so it is their wish and their joy to testify, concerning both him and themselves, in their *lives* and *conversations.* They are ashamed, and entitled to shame, when this is not the case. The true believer, walking as such, can chearfully say with the prophet; *I will greatly rejoice in the* LORD, *my soul shall be joyful in my* GOD, *for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered* (or, surrounded) *me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself* [יכהן *decketh as a priest*] *with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.** In one view, he is in the Bridegroom Christ, who is covered with majesty and glory; or as a priest under Christ before God, to stand up and worship, or to win others to him; and, in another view, he is in the church, as the bride of Christ, *betrothed* in an everlasting covenant, according to the emphatic promise by *Hosea.*† And what are these *ornaments* and *jewels?*—Here is an allusion to the peculiar dress of the people of God under the law, and especially to the attire of the high-priest, their representative before the throne. They were to wear frontlets,

* Isa. lxi. 10.

† Hos. ii. 19, 20.

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or phylacteries, &c. for *tokens* and for *signs*, which are likewise called *ornaments*,* or (as the word also means) *testimonies*, that they might be a *memorial* of their peculiar condition, and of their interest in God as his own inheritance. The high-priest particularly was to *deck himself for his ministry* before the Lord [יכהן, the same word as in the above text of Isaiah] with the glorious and beautiful garments, prescribed in Exod. xxviii. all of which related to the perfect salvation of Christ; and were significant *testimonies* of that salvation to his people. Christ was, in this respect, the *faithful witness* to them of *the sure mercies of the everlasting covenant*, which the divine persons had entered into before the world began. His redeemed were clothed with these garments and jewels in him and by him. They are *ornaments* or *testimonies*; first, upon him; but, upon him, only for them. *They* are also to have their *ornaments* or *testimonies*; not of phylacteries, frontlets, or fringes, as under the law; but the testimonies of a holy life and conversation, or (as the apostle expresses it, alluding probably to this very thing) *the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit* (becoming the bride of Christ) *which is in the sight of God of great price*.† They are also to be *fruitful* in every good word and work to his praise; as *branches yielding abundantly* in due season. This is *binding up*, or *strengthening, the testimony, and sealing*, or *confirming, the law* in those that are *taught* of God: in other words, this is to them the demonstration of all

* Exod. xiii 16. Deut. vi. 8, &c. Exod. xxxiii. 4.
† 1 Pet iii. 4.

divine

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divine truth, and the application of all divine promises, by the Holy Spirit and his power, The blessed impression is, for an earnest to themselves, upon their hearts; and the happy effects appear in their lives, as an unequivocal proof to confirm or confound those about them. These are the incorruptible *ornaments*, which *testify*, that they are indeed *betrothed* to Christ, and that they do really participate *the earnest*, so much spoken of in the Scriptures, of their adoption and everlasting inheritance. Holiness is the very dress of the people of God, as well as their ornament; and all that are without it, will in the end be considered as naked, or hateful, in his sight. But this holiness is evidently none of their own. It is wrought by the God of heaven, and descends by the grace of his Spirit from the skies.

God's children are also witnesses for him in their *death*. Sometimes they have been called to testify, as (what is commonly understood by the word) *martyrs;* i. e. as witnesses *who loved not their lives unto the death*, but sealed their testimony with their blood. Many have been tried in this way; and, antiently at least, it was considered as a distinguished and glorious privilege. The Lord showed, in great numbers of instances, how he could strengthen his people's faith above the fiercest terrors, in which death could attack them, and make them conquerors, and more than conquerors, over the united malice of earth and hell. "The noble army of martyrs" could praise him in dungeons, tortures, and flames, unvanquished and unappalled; and, as *the world was not worthy of them*, so they cared not for the world, nor for the slights, and scorns, and inveterate persecutions,

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cutions, which they found in it. Their Redeemer gave them a greatness and fortitude of mind, which enabled them to look down upon the love or the hatred, found in this corruptible state, with a noble indifference, and to be satisfied with his own will in raising glory from them, *whether it was by life or by death.** But the generality of God's people, and especially in these last days, are not called to this dignified testimony for him. They witness, however, even now, and will continue to witness to the end of the world, that he is *faithful and true*; that he doth not forsake his own in their needful and trying moments, but yields support according to the occasion or extremity; and that he can and doth supply such consolations, as neither the debility of sickness nor the pangs of death can either remove or abate. Thousands, and tens of thousands, have been enabled to sing with the psalmist; *my flesh, and my heart, faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

And if God's children can thus witness to his truth and power here, amidst the corruptions of the world, and in a dying frame of clay; O how will they testify, concerning *his goodness and his beauty* through the perfect enjoyment of every perfect faculty, in the bright regions of *life immortal!* What a day of endless testimony shall then appear! Praise in perfection; happiness in purity; love unutterable, unabating love, for evermore! What *a cloud of witnesses* will God's *great congregation* compose, in the realms of glory! Their number is beyond the reach of number; and their felicity unmeasured by the

* Phil. i. 20. Dan. iii. Heb. xi.

longest

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longest revolutions of time.—We cannot say, nor even conceive, what will be the methods of this illimitable joy. Nor can we apprehend the increasing energies of faculties purely spiritual, unremittingly engaged in that sublime state, which God's magnificent goodness and wisdom have provided for his redeemed. *It doth not yet appear, what we shall be.* This was the acknowledgment of a disciple, who knew most of the secrets of his Lord, and saw most of the glories of eternity from the confines of time. *But we know,* however, he adds, *that when he* (whom another apostle calls OUR LIFE*) *shall appear; we shall be like him; for we shall see him* AS HE IS.† Perpetual likeness to Christ will constitute one great subject of perpetual bliss, as well as form the undiminishable capacity to enjoy it.

All this is the purpose and effect of redemption; the very end too, for which the Most High JEHOVAH framed the world. Nothing else seems worthy either of him or his church. Not of *Him;* because only this eternity of loving-kindness and mercy could display the unutterable grandeur of his own infinite perfections: not of his *church;* because this immortal glory can only satiate those vehement desires of immortality, which God hath bestowed upon it, hath promised to satiate, and certainly bestowed and promised not in vain. He hath given her an heart above the world, which is perishing; and to love and seek himself alone for enjoyment in that bright state, which cannot pass away: And can it be imagined, that the God of truth will fail in power to make good his promise, or excite desires only for their more dreadful disappoint-

* Col. iii. 4. † John iii. 2.

ment?

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ment? This, indeed, would be rendering his own people *of all men the most miserable.* Or, for what other end, but this, which God hath declared,* could the wonderful mechanism of the world be brought into being at all, or be supported from that decay, which, we know, is inherent to matter? There is confessedly no other end, but this one, which hath not inscribed upon it the humbling motto, written in a character too universal and too plain to be mistaken—*all is vanity.* The WORD *of the* LORD only, with the objects interested in or connected with it, *endureth for ever.*

We may, then, subscribe, though in a better sense, the much-admired lines of a heathen poet, who sang more than he properly knew, and knew more than he could truly perform:

Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes, et inexorabile fatum,
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.

These a Christian may render:

Happy the man, who understands the cause
Of God's great system in its various laws;
Who, o'er the fears which this sad world can bring,
And over death's inexorable sting,
And hell's insatiate rage, as vanquish'd foes, can sing.

* Comp. John i. 3. Col. i. 16, 17, 18. Eph. iii. 9—11.

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PRESERVED.

THIS term implies an immense portion of comfort for the children of God; because it represents them, in its radical sense, as observed, defended, protected, shut up, and saved in Christ, like a precious depositum in a strong tower or city, which omnipotence itself is pledged to guard and support.

They are preserved in *body* by their Lord and Saviour, who orders all their times and circumstances, and who makes every thing, even contrary things, work together for their good. Their faculties, opportunities, and affairs, are all measured out by him, and all employed in that situation of life, which he knows to be the safest and the best for them. Their sorrows, mistakes, sicknesses, and lastly death itself, which are evils that consume the heart (as it were) of worldly men, he enables them to sustain or improve to their real and most lasting advantage.

They are preserved in *soul* by their gracious Redeemer. He bought them with his own blood for salvation; he regenerated them by his own Spirit to prepare them for the reception of his love and mercy; and, by the same Spirit, he trains them up and sanctifies them for the full and everlasting enjoyment of his heavenly kingdom. They are *the holy people, the redeemed of* JEHOVAH; and

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and are called, *Sought out, a city not forsaken:* and thus do they become the true *Nazarenes*, through Christ the נצר, the *Nazarene*, the *branch*, the *keeper;* and, according to their name, are *kept*, or *defended, by him through faith unto salvation.** They are *preserved, because* (as the Psalmist speaks) *they are holy;* i. e. made sacred or consecrated to God by the blood of the Lamb.

Thus they are preserved and spiritually shut up, as a garden inclosed, as a field recovered from the waste, as an holy and impregnable fortification, as the sacred peculium of God, which he will suffer no enemy to touch but *as the apple of his eye.*

When *Noah* had entered into the ark, by God's command, we are told immediately, that *the* LORD *shut him in.*† He was under the divine guidance and protection, during the time of a most tremendous desolation: and though he seemed, as it were, put out of sight and shut up as in a prison, the Lord had his eye continually upon him and his, and made them a new seed to come forth in due time and replenish the world.

When the children of Israel, as the figure of the chosen remnant, were to be signally preserved, while the Lord poured forth his destruction upon the first-born of *Egypt;* it was expressly enjoined, that *none of them should go*

* Isa. xxvii. 3. 1 Pet. i. 5. They are also the real *Nazarites*, who drink no wine or strong drink, in the sense of Rev. xviii. 3. but are kept *sober, unintoxicated*, and *unspotted*, in the world.

† Gen. vii. 16.

out

*out of the door of his house till the morning.** They were hidden or shut up, till the indignation was overpast, typifying this great spiritual truth to the children of God, who are his *preserved for ever*, that they are kept separate from the world, under the propitiation of Christ, and shall be delivered by him, when the great morning shall appear, and the Sun of righteousness shine forth in all his glory. The history of the deliverance of *Rahab* and her family, by the *scarlet thread* and by confinement to the house, preached the same important doctrine of salvation in and by the future Redeemer.

The same idea was also exhibited by the ark of the covenant, into which God's people entered by faith, like *David*, as *into the secret of his tabernacle*, which not even *David*, nor any other man while in the flesh, could corporally enter; where they were *hidden*, and protected *under the wings*† of the cherubim, covering them and the mercy-seat over them, with infinite love ard complacency.

The prophet *Isaiah* was directed to hold, in the Lord's name, the same language. *Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast: for behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more*

* Exod. xii. 22, 23. The same idea is intended by the Lord's *encamping*, or being a *wall of fire*, around his people. Their security is in his defence. This was signified to *Jacob*, at a trying time, in Gen. xxxii. 2. See also Zech. ix. 8. ii. 5. Ps. cxxv. 2.

† See Ps. xvii. 8. lvii. 1. lxi. 4. xci. 4.

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*cover her slain.** What this safe refuge is, the same prophet tells us in another place: *Thou* (Jehovah) *hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall..*†

This is the blessed privilege of those, *who are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Christ Jesus, and called.*‡ OF ALL, WHICH the Father HATH GIVEN HIM, it will be known for an everlasting truth, that HE HATH LOST NOTHING, but that he hath *kept them through his own name* or power, that they might *be made perfect in one* for glory and salvation. The Father's love hath separated them and shut them up from the world by his own eternal purpose; the Son's grace protects them in himself, to whom they are united by his glorious humanity; and the Spirit effectually calls them to this salvation. This is the method, and these are the means, of all their happiness and glory. They are neither wiser, nor better, nor stronger, nor lovelier, by nature than others; but they are made, they know not why further than God's word hath explained it, the chosen and saved of the Lord; while the rest of the world, with all the angels who kept not their first estate, are passed over and left in their sins. Our Lord himself, even in an address to the Father, where an explanation might have been expected if any where, gives no reason but this; *Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.* The preserved of the Lord are satisfied with this explanation: the people of the world,

* Isa. xxvi. 20, 21.
† Isa. xxv. 4. ‡ Jude 1.

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the vain reasoners of mankind, could never upon this point be satisfied with any.

It is evident, then, that this whole matter is entirely of grace. *Noah* found *favor*, that is, as the Hebrew word means, *free grace*; and *Abraham*; and *Jacob* above his brother; and the children of *Israel*; and *Rahab*; and the Virgin *Mary*; and the redeemed in all ages; or they would have remained vile, helpless, miserable sinners. It was God, who *made them* to differ; and, if we could hear them all speak, every one would confess with the apostle; *By the grace of God, I am what I am.*

And this, O believer, I am very sure, is thy heart-felt confession. Thou hast nothing to say for thyself, but, "thus it hath pleased the Lord;" it is all "his doing;" and "it is marvellous in my eyes."

Thus grace begins the good work in the soul, carries it on, and completes it for the day of the Lord Jesus. Not one of all the redeemed stands, by his own strength, or upon his own foundation. Left to themselves, the most fervent and lively would soon grow cold and dead: but united to Christ, the *bruised reed* receives omnipotent might, and the lowest and the least are eternally safe.

What inexpressible consolation, then, doth not this title afford to the *afflicted Christian?* Brother, thou mayest be, though not very likely, as outwardly wretched as *Lazarus*; thou mayest, though not very probably, be brought for Christ's sake to the trial *of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment.* Nay, suppose thou wert called, as many blessed ones have been, to be *stoned, or sawn asunder, or tempted or slain with the sword; to wander about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented:*

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suppose all this and much more, which have not been suppositions but great realities in former days; still remember, as they did, that thou art, notwithstanding, *the* PRESERVED *of the* LORD, and that neither men nor devils can touch one hair of thy head, without his permission and knowledge. When he suffers their malice to operate, thou art safe in his hand, beyond the reach of every effort to injure thee really, and much less to destroy. Thou mayest sing the xlvith Psalm in defiance of them all. Thou mayest plead God's own promise, in the *waters*, in the *river*, and in the *fire*;* and he will make it perfectly good. Yea, thou mayest rise up to the apostle's challenge, without the least excess or bravado; *Who, who, who,* can *oppose,* or *accuse, or condemn,* or *separate? Not death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth,* NOR ANY OTHER CREATURE.—*Let the redeemed,* and preserved, *of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;*† *for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever.* Do thou say this also, my brother in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ; and surely thou shalt find the truth of God not truer to others than it will be to thee. Stay thyself upon him, who is faithfulness itself; cast thy burden upon him, who hath promised to sustain thee; rest in patience upon his love and time; leave all the management and event in his hands; and, surely, thou shalt one day have cause to say, "I never sought his face in vain; nor hath any thing failed of all that he engaged in his word to perform, either for my body or my soul."

* Isa. xliii. 1, 2. † Ps. cvii. 2. See also Isa. liv. 10.

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GLORIFIED.

WHEN I began these humble attempts, I purposed to treat of several other titular descriptions of the church, besides those which I have now submitted to the reader's candid consideration; such as, FRIENDS, and BRETHREN, of Christ; LIGHTS; STARS; BRIDE; FLOCK; SEALED; spiritual HEBREWS, JEWS, ISRAELITES; SOLDIERS of Christ; MEEK; REMNANT; VESSELS *of* MERCY; DISCIPLES; &c. but the consideration of swelling the volume so as to render it expensive to the poor, and the hope that what hath been put down may suffice to show, that the NAMES, which God hath given to his people, are not *names of emptiness,* but have some great, precise and leading truth or doctrine contained in them; have deterred me from a further prosecution of the subject. I will therefore conclude the whole with a title, under which the faith and hope of the children of God are concluded, and which implies the end and consummation of their very being.

The title GLORIFIED denotes the completion of all the purposes and work of God in and for the Christian, and the final accomplishment of all his own views and expectations.

The word GLORY signifies weight and solidity, and is opposed to all that is frivolous, empty, or unsub-

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stantial. It conveys the idea, therefore, of what is perfectly valuable and unchangeably lasting. Applying, then, the term *glorified* (as the Holy Spirit applies it) to the children of God, it denotes them precious in his sight who made them such, and perfect and happy in themselves without mutation and without end.

There is *a purpose of God according to election*, which must *stand**; and this purpose, defined *particularly* in every endearing name, by which he calls his people, and many of which it has been the purpose of this treatise to consider in that view, is *generally* marked out by that noble deduction, which the apostle makes in the epistle to the Romans. Speaking of this *purpose*, he says; *Whom* God *did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and, whom he called, them he also justified; and, whom he justified, them he also* GLORIFIED. *What shall we then say to these things?*† Who, that desires not to be *found a liar*,‡ shall dare to contradict, what God asserts to be true? And, if he be for us, who can be against us?

What the state of *glory* is, and consequently what it is to be *glorified*; we cannot fully conceive in this world. We know it, at most, by hints or glimpses from the word and Spirit of God in meditation and prayer; and what we do know, and hath been known, in this state (even by an highly favoured apostle§) rather leads to a

* Rom. ix. 11.

† Rom. viii. 28—31. ‡ Rom. iii. 4.

§ 2 Cor. xii. 2. St. *Paul* says, that he was *caught up* (in spirit) *to the third heaven*—to *paradise; and heard unspeakable words, which*

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contemplation inexpressible, than warrants any attempt to express it. All that is rich, sublime, holy, delightful, perfect, aweful, and magnificent, concur to form a sort of aggregate idea; and when this is insufficient, or when we are sure, that all our conception is excessively beneath the unutterable grandeur of the thing, we are obliged, through the poverty of our best thoughts and words, to employ *negatives*, in order to raise up our hearts and understandings a little higher in this sweet and sublime expetiation. We say, it is unutterable, unlimitable, unimpeachable, undefilable, inconceivable; and when we say all this, we proclaim our own unworthiness and ignorance of that transcendent bliss, which no mortal eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of creatures to conceive. We are sure, that it is a solid and enduring state or substance, not affected by the flux of time or revolution of circumstances, and therefore often shadowed forth under the notion of *sitting* and *rest*—*sitting on thrones*, as triumphant kings; *resting* in permanent and unchangeable glory, as having attained the accomplishment of God's purpose and the end of their own being. No compass of thought,

which it is not lawful, or possible, *for man to utter*. This שמי שמים, *heavens of heavens*, of which the sensible שמים are the figure or type, denote the supreme state, or immediate knowledge of and communion with Jehovah; and therefore it is probably called *the third heavens*, not only *eminentiæ gratia*, but because in that state Jehovah is intimately known (as far as the intellect of creatures can know him) in his three persons, the undivided trinity in perfect unity. The apostle probably had such an astonishing view of this glory, as almost overwhelmed him. So had others: Exod. iii. 6. Isa. vi. 2. Rev. i. 17.

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no greatness of mind, either in earth or heaven, can arrive at more than a very feeble and faint conception of this true sublime. "Itself (as one says of it) is its own hyperbole;" for raise *hyperbole upon hyperbole*, with the apostle, language labors and is lost in the rising transcendency of the still *exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. Like untutored babes, we may stammer and lisp about it here; but our highest words cannot explain the lowest ray of the indescribable majesty of that state and perfection, in which the redeemed of the LORD are appointed to live with him for ever and ever.

Upon this superlative subject, it may, however, not be improper to set down a few passages of scripture for the pious reader's devout and happy meditation, and with them conclude our attempts to enlarge upon an ineffable theme, which surpasses, while it gladdens and employs, the purified and perspicuous intellect of the most exalted spirits, in the regions of light eternal.

This consummate state is called by the prophet, *A glorious high throne from the beginning, the place of our sanctuary:** or, as it might more truly be rendered, "The throne of glory, the height from the beginning, [i. e. CHRIST, who is *the beginning*, the *first* and the *last*, in whom also his people were *chosen from the beginning* and before all worlds] is the place of our sanctuary." Upon the removal of the ark of the covenant, which symbolized God in Christ, and Christ in his people, and was the representative throne of glory, and "the very life and soul" of the whole Jewish dispensation; and

* Jer. xvii. 12.

upon

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upon the abolition of all other types and shadows; it is said, *At that time they shall call Jerusalem* [meaning the spiritual city and people of God] *the throne of* JEHOVAH; *and all nations* [Gentiles as well as Jews] *shall be gathered unto it—But I said, how shall I put thee* [the heathen] *among the children, and give thee the land of desire, and the heritage of glory, O hosts of the nations! And he said, Thou shalt call me,* MY FATHER; *and thou shalt not turn away from after me.** So, in the consummation of all things, *the temple of God will be opened in heaven, and there will be seen in his temple the ark of his testament;* that is, the completion of the church of God in glory, as his own *habitation through the Spirit.*† The Lord *raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill* [and such are all his people, and such their condition, by nature] *to set them among princes, and to make them inherit* [to give them the right of heirship to] *the throne of glory.*‡ *And above the firmament, that was over their heads, was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire-stone, and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man* [Christ] *above upon it.*§ *Thy throne, O God,* [Christ] *is for ever and ever: a sceptre of rectitude,* or making right, *is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*‖ *What are these, who are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, my Lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they, who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and*

* Jer. iii. 16—19 † Rev. xi. 19. ‡ 1 Sam. ii. 8.
§ Ezek. i. 26. ‖ Ps. xlv. 6, Heb. i. 8.

made

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made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and worship him day and night in his temple; and he, that sitteth upon the throne, shall dwell, or tabernacle, *among them.** *To him, that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*† *And he showed me the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal* [the emblem of the Holy Spirit] *proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*‡ That is; he was showed the consummation of the work and glory of the three persons in Jehovah, concerning their covenant of redemption. To this same purpose *Ezekiel*, chap. xlvii. The *waters issued from under the door of the house*, v. 1. The Spirit came from Christ and by him to his people. *And it shall be, that every living soul, which moveth, for every one of whom the river shall come there, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither; for they shall be healed, and every one shall live whither the river cometh.* The Spirit of God quickens the souls of his people, and was given for that end; and these shall be a very great multitude, according to Luke v. 6—10. *And it shall be, that the fishers shall stand upon it* [the ministers of the word shall stand by or in the Spirit of the word] *from En-gedi even to En-eglaim* [from the fountain of the *kid* to the fountain of the *calves*, i. e. from conducting sinners to the *sacrifice for sin* and its consequent pardon, to the *sacrifice of thanksgivings* and its effects in the communion of joy] *there shall be a*

* Rev. vii. 13.—15. † Rev. iii. 21.
‡ Rev. xxii. 1.

spreading

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spreading forth of nets [a great promulgation of the gospel] *their fish shall be according to its kind*, or of every kind [some of all nations] *as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof* [the wicked, who cast out mire and dirt] *and the marshy places thereof* [the carnal professor, who stagnates under the living water] *shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt*, or the curse. *And upon the river, upon the banks thereof, shall rise up hither and thither every tree for food: its leaf shall not fade, neither shall its fruit fail: it shall bring forth its first-fruits for its months* [fruit shall continually be renewed for the divine praise] *because its waters, even they, sprang from out of the sanctuary; and its fruit shall be for food, and its leaf for medicine.*—So CHRIST himself: *the* GLORY, *which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect*, or be consummated, *in one. Father, I will, that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.**—*We all* (says the apostle) *with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.*†—*To* Christ *coming, as unto a living stone—ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house.*‡ *In* Christ *all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; IN* WHOM *ye also are builded together for an* HABITATION *of* GOD *through the* SPIRIT.§

* John xvii. 22, &c. † 2 Cor. iii. 18. ‡ 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.
§ Eph. ii. 21, 22.

My

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My Christian brethren, *ye see your calling*, and the *end* of it. The calling is of God, in its design and execution; and the end of it is your happiness and complete salvation. You must have seen, that ALL IS OF GRACE to you, from its *origin* or *beginning*, flowing through every *means* for accomplishing the divine and benevolent purpose, to its perfect consummation in the realms of glory. Hence it is, that the *names* and *titles*, given by God himself to the heirs of promise, are almost all of a *passive* kind, that the *activity*, and consequently the *boasting*, of man, in the procurement of this wonderful blessing, might be wholly *excluded*.* The *law of faith*, wherever it prevails, necessarily and invariably excludes this; because faith is that grace and gift of God to the soul, which teaches and enables it to look *out of itself* for every good *to another*, even to HIM, who says to all his people; *without me ye can do nothing*. But if it were *of works*, as the Spirit of God by the apostle intimates, it would be quite otherwise; for, in that case, man would *have whereof to boast*, and might plead wonderful things in behalf, or as the effect, of *his own* activity. It is true: that a real believer is active, and privileged to be so above all other men, who talk and do not, nor can find it in their hearts to do any thing "as God wills it to be done;" but the spirit of the activity is none of his own: it is the agency of God upon him, making him, first, willing to work, and, then, working in him to accomplish all according to his own good pleasure, and to the praise of the glory of his own grace by Christ Jesus. This is

* Rom. iii, 27.

a very

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a very different mode of action, both in principle and design, and leads to very different consequences. Every experienced Christian feels the power of this truth; and none other can rightly understand it.

A worldly man, indeed, like a mole or bat, or some short-sighted animal, sees no objects or prospects of welfare, but such as apply immediately to bodily sense; but the real Christian, elevated on the sublimity of divine truth, looks by *faith*, as through an unerring telescope, over the low and narrow bounds of earth and time, beholds the everlasting hills of that *land which is very far off*, and contemplates with joy the unalienable inheritance, which is there secured to him, by the love and power of his heavenly Father.

For the edification and comfort of his redeemed brethren, and for an humble testimony from himself to the truths of God, the author, in hours of retired leisure, composed these essays, and hath ventured them into the world. He hath also endeavoured to be a faithful witness, and is so far confident of the reality of those things, which he has submitted, that, he hopes, he can say without presumption, That they are powerful principles by which he now lives in hope and peace, and joyful evidences on which, through mercy, he trusts at last to lay down his head and die. If God's word be true and there be any meaning in it, he fears no disappointment; but is firmly persuaded, that the great points of salvation, which he hath been labouring to explain and enforce upon others, shall be finally and eternally obtained by himself, though less than the least of all God's mercies, and utterly unworthy of any of them.

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He hath been the more inclined to trespass upon the public indulgence, with these essays, from the consideration of the numberless errors and of the great departure from evangelical truth, which appear in these latter days, to the molestation, and in part to the subversion, of the professing Christian world. It is awful to reflect, how men can dare, in this our land especially, to appeal by oaths to the God of truth for their *hearty (ex animo)* belief of those things, which immediately afterwards they can covertly undermine, or openly and shamelessly declare not to believe. The perjuries, which have been avowedly committed upon this account, are sufficient, both in number and weight, to crush any establishment into ruins. It is not a light thing to depart from principles, authorized and owned of God. The *Jewish* state and dispensation were not overthrown, but upon the dereliction of those great truths, for which, as a nation, they were raised, and on which they stood. The *Arian* renunciation of the true doctrine of the Trinity, without which the Christian religion itself must fall, brought the overwhelming scourge of the *Mahometan* infidelity on the once-flourishing churches of *Asia*, which threw them to the ground. And, to add no more, the church of *Rome* seems verging fast to entire decay, by the suppression of true doctrine, and by the introduction of false tenets and idle superstitions, equally offensive to common sense and to the beautiful truth and simplicity of the Christian religion.

But, amidst all the circumstances of outward desolation, there is a consolation for the Christian's heart, which can never be taken away: *The foundation of God standeth sure; the*

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the Lord knoweth them that are his; and *they* are *safe.* When the world itself falls into destruction, these shall be preserved, and shall shine forth in the regions of bliss. The LORD himself is their *keeper* now; and their *glorifier* for evermore.—O what a prospect is this, in the midst of all the darkness of an evil world! what a consummation! what a joy! Life here is nothing in that view, nor all the matters of life. Death vanishes, with his terrors, before the faith and hope of this radiant scene. Eternity, awful eternity, with all its height and depth, appears only a boundless ocean of liberty, light, and love; to which every moment is carrying on the soul, and which the soul is led to pant after, the nearer it approaches, and the more it perceives it.—O my God! what hast thou prepared for them that love thee!—What a covenant manifested, *ordered in all things and sure!* What a fulfilment effected, arising in all things beyond the language or the thought of man! How art thou, O FATHER, glorified in thy vast designs of truth and love! how art thou, O blessed SON, exalted in the rich display of thy mercy and grace! how art thou, O Holy Spirit, triumphantly extolled in the full and perfect completion of all thy wonderful acts in the souls of men! Thou one adorable JEHOVAH in three persons; to thee, to thee, and only to thee, be all the honor and glory, all the dominion and power, all the happiness and mercy, ascribed, world without end!

Let *every creature,* then, *which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, say; blessing, and honor, and glory*

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glory, and power, be unto HIM *that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the* LAMB *for ever and ever.* Chiefly, *let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy,* and who *understand his loving kindness and truth: let them give thanks unto his holy name;* for *he is good,* and *doeth good; and his mercy endureth for ever.* AMEN.

A SUPPOSED

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A SUPPOSED DIALOGUE IN HEAVEN,

BETWEEN

THE CRUCIFIED THIEF,

AND

THE APOSTLE PAUL,

DISCUSSING THE QUESTION,

Who was the greater Sinner of the two before Conversion?

For this Cause, I obtained Mercy, that in me FIRST *Jesus Christ might show forth* ALL LONG-SUFFERING, *for a Pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to Life everlasting.*—1 Tim. i. 16.

PAUL.—I am glad to see you in this blessed place, my brother. You came hither some time before me; but, through astonishing mercy, I also arrived at last, blessed be my Redeemer!

Thief.—If you are surprised, that mercy was granted to you for life eternal; how much greater wonder may I feel, that so vile a wretch as I should have been ransomed

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somed from destruction, and admitted to such a place, and to such company, as I find here!

Paul.—It is a wonder, indeed, that you should be saved; and doubtless you are a striking monument of peculiar mercy: but I, however, appear to myself, a far superior proof of the riches of divine grace, and a far greater miracle of the divine power, than you are, notwithstanding the apparent circumstances of your wicked life in the lower world.

Thief.—I will readily allow, that you may have a much deeper sense and more enlarged views of the goodness of God, than I am capable of; and this indeed is a proof of brighter endowments, and, in that sense, of richer grace and mercy: but, in another view, considering me in my state of nature, I certainly must appear a more enormous sinner than you were in the same state; and consequently my salvation, in respect of our unconverted condition, a more surprising instance of divine condescension and favor.

Paul.—With respect to *bodily* acts of sin and to offences against *civil society*, I admit, that your life an conversation were more atrocious and pernicious than mine. But, when it pleased God to open my blind eyes and manifest me to my own self, I discovered greater enormities in my heart and conduct against God, than could be found in your practices against men, detestable as they certainly were.

Thief.—Very few, I believe, in the lower world will either understand or allow of this. What! shall it be said then, that my roguery, treason, murder, and all sorts of destructive wickedness, were less crimes, than your

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your fasting, prayer, your strict conversation, and rigid life, which you yourself have owned, as concerning the righteousness of the Jewish law, to have been *blameless?*

Paul.—Whatever were the appearances, your life and mine were highly sinful, and both utterly unjustifiable. But if you debate with me; *who* was *the greater sinner* before God, and not before man only; and *who*, in consequence, is and was peculiarly the object of God's greater mercy; I believe, it will be found, upon due examination, that your degree of criminality, in the sight of the Most Holy, was less than mine.

Thief.—I have scarcely thought it possible, that a greater sinner than myself could have been found amongst the redeemed; so notoriously wicked, and shameless, was I. You will give me leave, therefore, to speak of this matter a little with you, and to state the circumstances of my case for your farther consideration.

I was a wretched creature most surely: a poor, low fellow, of Gentile or mongrel extraction. Born of parents obscure, and perhaps no better than myself, they seemed neither capable nor desirous of giving me an education, but such as might qualify me to be a distinguished or successful villain. No crime, no roguery, no baseness, no murder, did I hesitate to commit. I felt, upon the commission of these, no remorse: I was touched with no tenderness or shame. This kind of life I followed for many years, hardened in my heart against the cries of the injured, defying or regardless of the vengeance of heaven, a mere calamitous scourge, the pest of society, the audacious foe of God and man.

Can you pretend, dear PAUL, to say, that your life

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was like mine? that it was marked with such abandoned guilt? that it discovered such extreme depravity? or, that it could possibly be so odious and abominable, in the sight of heaven or earth, as mine was? You cannot surely dispute the palm of wickedness with me, and consequently are not quite so much a monument of superabundant goodness as myself. All heaven, I think, can scarcely produce such another.

Paul.—That your course of life was wicked and detestable, I have allowed; nor do I mean to lessen or extenuate one of your crimes. Bad enough they were, most assuredly, before God and man. However, my brother, you and I are not to judge according to outward appearance, but according to a more righteous judgement.

Respecting the flesh, I had certainly advantages superior to your's. I grant, and have granted, that no man had more;* and, after me, not any one had, or could have, so many. I was born of the unmixed stock of *Abraham*, and of one of the most highly favoured tribes. My parents initiated me into the outward church without delay, and afforded me every assistance, that kindness and piety could afford, to render me both a great and good man: nor was their tender concern lost upon me; for *I profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation*, and became, among the Pharisees themselves, who, you know, were reputed supereminently strict and devout, one of the most strict, devout, and zealous of any. And yet all this I counted *loss*, I counted *dung*: mere *filth* it was, and I found it to

* Phil. iii. 4.

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be so, when it pleased God to open my eyes, and to apply his law in its pungent spirituality to my heart. Then the *sin*, which was in the whole and every part of my corrupt nature, *revived;* and *I*, poor PAUL, a convicted, self-condemned, overwhelmed sinner, sunk under the load and spiritually, or legally, *died.** Here it was that mercy found me; and, from this sad condition, the power of God restored me to *newness of life*. O astonishing mercy, that could descend to such a caitiff as I was; that could *change* so base, so rebellious, so proud, so odious a will, as mine; that could open my blinded eyes, could humble the pride of my heart, and turn such a wretch as myself, *from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God!*

Thief.—But, granting that your former life had in it the nature of sin, how can you prove, that it was so exceedingly sinful as mine? You fasted and prayed, while I plundered and stole; you demeaned yourself soberly and justly before all men, while I was a ravager and a murderer; you had knowledge, and usefulness, and reputation, while I was hardened in ignorance, impudence, and every scandalous enormity. How then was your state of sinfulness so dangerous, or so deplorable, as mine?

Paul.—In the sight of *men*, and so far indeed as regards the outward welfare of society, I allow it was not. But, when we come to consider the *principles* of action, and their *final tendency*, I must esteem the spirit of my sins (if I may use the expression) to have in it a greater

* Rom. vii. 9.

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malignity than even your's had, though there was enough of it in your's to damn a thousand worlds.

The depravity of your nature and mine was undoubtedly equal and the same; but the exercise, the force, the direction of that depravity in you, were mostly of a *carporal* nature, and affected the properties or persons of men, without the thought, indeed, or the fear of God before your eyes. You had the fierce and ravaging passions of the beast, driving you on to excesses without consideration. Sensuality was your principle, your aim, and your end. My corruptions, on the other hand, took a different course. They were altogether under a more refined and spiritual management. With the notion of serving God, I was altogether a rebel against him; setting up my own perverse will against his; my ignorance against his wisdom; my duties against his righteousness; the form of godliness against the substance or power of it; the legal shadows, by a vile perversion, against what those shadows exhibited and were intended to teach; and, in a word, my sinful self (garnished and set off by human skill and labour) in direct opposition to Christ the Redeemer, and the whole plan of his salvation.

Thief.—But was not I guilty of a similar offence against him, and in a most dreadful degree too, when I joined, not only with my fellow-thief, but with the scribes, pharisees, and chief priests, in *casting* the most blasphemous invectives *in his teeth?**

Paul.—True; you joined in the outward and outrageous expression of their sin; but it was not possible for you,

* Matt. xxvii, 44.

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in your state, to have the peculiar malignity of it in your heart against your Saviour. You did not attempt to justify yourself. You owned, that you *received the just reward of your deeds*, and therefore that you had no claim whatever, before God or man, of better treatment for your villainies. But I, and those chief priests and pharisees, reputedly learned and devout, *detested* Christ and his gracious work of redemption both together; *resisted* constantly and maliciously *the Spirit of God*,* in the merciful revelation of his will; preferred the carnal and erroneous reasonings and traditions of sinful and arrogant men to his positive truth, *making it*, as far as we could, *of none effect*; and *doing* all the *despight* in our power to the grace, wisdom, designs, and love of God. And we did all this too, with peculiar aggravation, under the cover of his own institutions, perverting them by satanic pride, and under the most subtle and vehement influence of the satanic spirit.

Thief.—But surely I was under diabolic influence in my state of nature as well as you, or (as you have somewhere expressed it) was *taken captive by the prince of the power of the air at his will*.†

Paul.—Granted; but yet in another manner, and in a way of less direct and special malignity against God. The devil, as the *Samael*, or *blinding god of this world*,‡ ruleth and *worketh in the children of disobedience* universally; but, in some, by the grossness of their corporal faculties: and, in these, because the offence is more apparent and hideous to man's outward senses, he appears as the devil in black, altogether troublesome

* Acts vii. 51. † 2 Tim. ii. 26. ‡ 2 Cor. iv. 4.

and pernicious. He sets carnal interests at variance, stirs up carnal passions upon them, and ends the matter with carnal violence: or, he excites other foul dispositions, which seek their gratification or end in sordid or carnal sensualities. But satan is never so dangerous as when dressed in white, when he comes with pretended refinements of holiness, and, under the specious disguise of self-wrought righteousness, would appear like an *angel of light* from heaven; nor is he ever so truly malignant and baleful as then. Who could have expected to have found him in a man, garnished with phylacteries full of texts from the law of God; saying long prayers, at all times, in the house, and in the market; or so overflowing with devotion, as not to be able to conceal it from the public eye at the turnings and corners of the streets? Who could think ill of the zeal, by which he induced men to sleep on a narrow hard board, that they might rise up the earlier to the worship of God; or to afflict themselves, in various ways, with thorns for the same purpose? Who would imagine, that the devil should be so careful and sanctimonious a regarder of the divine institutions, as to prompt the strictest tythe of the very *mint, anise, and cummin*; or so careful to preserve men from sin, as to enjoin them to wear long hoods, and to keep their eyes constantly upon the ground, lest they should be defiled by some beautiful objects or some ensnaring temptations to iniquity? Who could believe, *if ignorant of his devices*, or the *mysterious depths of satan*,* that it was possible for him to set men upon keeping the whole law of God, that he should urge them to establish

* 2 Cor. ii. 11. 2 Thess. ii. 7. Rev. ii. 24.

a righteous-

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a righteousness and holiness for themselves, and that he should press them to inculcate these strenuously upon others? And yet all this satan urged upon me, and upon my brethren the pharisees: and as this hath been his constant practice, from the days of *Cain*, so he is now busy in the same work among men, and will probably employ himself in the same way to the end of the world. He knows well, how to foster "a pestilent pride in an imaginary humility," and how to poison by "an infectious foulness in an imaginary purity." Such are his *depths* and devices.

Thief.—And yet, I believe, some of these people have been sincere in all this, not knowing by what spirit they were led, or indeed what manner of spirit they were of.

Paul.—Unquestionably. They were sincere, and yet (paradoxical as it may seem) they were *hypocrites;* and so they were named by our Lord, when he was among them. They were *sincere*, knowing no better, and going onward as they were driven; that is, they really meant to justify themselves, and really thought that they were *doing God service.* But they were *hypocrites* notwithstanding; for they could not but know and feel, pretend what they might, that they broke the law of God continually in one respect or other, and that therefore their claim to be justified by what they had broken, must be a palpable absurdity in itself, and of course a mere cheat, if presumed on as a title for reward. Besides, the *doing their works to be seen of men*, and in order to gain human esteem, if there had been no other imperfection in them, was a violation of the first and great commandment, namely,

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namely, an exaltation of the glory of SELF against God, whom ALONE the law directs to be *served*, without any sinister motive or improper end. The perversion therefore of this law, by human frailty or corruption, is a pollution which God will avenge, and especially when committed under self-righteous pretences and disguises; for these, while they turn the law from its true use in showing men their sin, do pertinaciously reject the gospel itself, in which God hath revealed the *only* method of atonement and justification.

Thief.—All this is bad enough. But how does the principle apply to you, so as to establish the conclusion, that you, in your natural state, could be a greater sinner than myself? I know indeed, that you have said, You were *the chief of sinners;* but this has been thought rather a mark of your own deep humility, than a positive truth to be admitted in its full signification.

Paul.—Indeed, I meant fully what I said; and I conceived and found it to be a solemn truth, that no sinner could be greater than poor *Paul;* the zealous, the admired, the scrupulous pharisee. I had all the blindness and error in me, of which I have been speaking. Not only was I devoted to my own righteousness; but I was a warm and eager advocate for all, who thought and acted upon the same principle. And if you still insist upon bodily demonstrations of an evil heart, remember what all this self-righteousness produced, and what I have declared; namely, that I was once (like you) a *blasphemer* myself, and a *compeller* of others *to blaspheme*, a *persecutor*, and *injurious;* I might even say a *murderer;* yea, a "holy and bloody *hypocrite*;"* for I was consenting

* *Luth.*

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senting to the death of the martyr *Stephen*, and, in the great persecution which followed his murder, gave my voice against many for their destruction, thinking it my greatest glory to *make havock of the church of God*. The foundation of all this was (though I did not then know it) my *carnal mind, vainly puffed up* with self, and full of *enmity against God*, which, though it professed the most exact submission, was really *not subject to the law of God, neither indeed could be.** So far as the body could act, all seemed fair and well in the sight of men like myself. The *sepulchre* was finely painted and *whitened* handsomely for human view on the outside; but *within, all was rottenness* and pollution, all was filthy and loathsome, like *dead men's bones*. And when the occasion offered, you have seen what became of this superficial holiness;—I *persecuted the church of God*. Thus, whether my inward motives or my outward life be considered; how is it possible, that your load of guilt could be greater than mine? Men indeed justified my guilt, and called it goodness; but this was only rendering my case more desperate, by aggravating and increasing the malady. Nor was my evil singular, though singularly strong in me. None, among the sinners of mankind, were more cruel and persevering in malice against Christ himself, than my brethren in flesh and sentiment, the chief priests, scribes, and pharisees; and these, you know, were the most learned and seemed the most devout of all men in my nation, and therefore they were popularly considered and resorted to, as the first authorities in the things of God.

* Rom. viii. 7.

Thief.

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Thief.—Alas! I joined with them too in that affair of persecution, as far as I could; and reviled the Son of God myself, while he was hanging by me on the cross for my sins.

Paul.—You were a poor ignorant sinner, and (as the world beneath says) one of the mob: and the mob is usually drawn by the mere name and authority of such men, as I am speaking of, to do a thousand things against religion, which otherwise they would not have thought of, having no concern in their minds about the matter. *Your* fury was that of a brute hunting or hunted by men: *Their* rage was the immediate possession of the devil himself.

But, in order to understand the true composition of me, and of the scribes and pharisees, my antient friends, in our natural state, it is necessary to distinguish between our *religion* itself, which in its grounds and purpose was ever right and holy, and the *principle* in and by which we received and maintained it. Religion, properly so called, must be *one* and *true*, being the immediate offspring or revelation of God; but there is a wide and (I may say, contemplating the consequences) an eternal difference between the conception and reception of this religion by the *carnal mind*,* as it exists in every man by nature through the fall, and by the *spiritual mind*,† as it is renewed in the real christian through the grace of Christ. The object is the same; but the principle of vision, or faculty of apprehension, is exactly as opposite, as flesh is to spirit, or darkness to light. The *flesh*, that is, fallen and depraved nature, views every thing through

* 1 Cor. ii. 14. † 1 Cor. ii. *passim*.

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its own carnal and corrupted reason—a principle, founded in doubt, and always concluding according to animal sense, and therefore in divine things, which are naturally too sublime for its reach, concluding falsely. The *spirit*, that is, the renewed mind, is first enabled *to cast down reasonings*,* or carnal apprehensions *intruding into things not seen* by them, and then by faith, a principle wrought by *the operation of God*, to embrace truth upon divine authority, and to live in humble resignation for the knowledge and enjoyment of it, through the ways and means of his appointment.

Owing to the difference of these two principles, God's holy religion, as professed by one or other of them, appears a very different thing, though it be not so in itself, and is employed to very different ends. Religion, held by the flesh, shall puff a man up, and incline him to think, that *he is not as other men are.* It shall appear in *the fleshly mind* under all the horrid circumstances of furious bigotry and intolerant zeal, inducing persecution, violence, contentions, hatred, and murder. Of this complexion were the high priest and his associates, who condemned the first martyr under the gospel, our brother *Stephen;* and when he faithfully charged them, in those memorable words; *Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye; which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them who showed before of the coming of the* JUST ONE, *of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers;*—they ful-

* Λογισμους. 2 Cor. x. 5.

filled

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filled the whole, by murdering him also. And yet, at the same time, this outrageous spirit, masked by the profession of the true religion, added weight and splendor to their character in the eyes of the world, and seemed to increase the size of their holiness and devotion.

Thief.—I now comprehend all this; though, in the days of my flesh, I should no more have understood it than the pharisees themselves. And I plainly perceive what our Lord meant by saying to his disciples, that if their righteousness did not exceed the righteousness of the scribes, great as it was in the eyes of men, they should in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. But, pray go on with your discourse, which is to me very interesting and important.

Paul.—When a man takes up with religion in the flesh, he is induced to do so, not out of real love to the things of God, or to God himself; but either from education, or the fear of hell, or the love of fame among decent people, or the care of temporal interest, or from the wish to stand high in his own importance and esteem. For some or other of these purposes, he will be very strict in all outward shows and ceremonies of religion, and will even go on to fancy, that a fondness for these, and a zealous occupation in them, are the very essence of religion itself. He will perhaps fast, and pray, and give alms; and with more noise and clatter too than twenty real Christians. He will talk much of holiness and strictness of life, of rigid attention to the law of God, of charity to men, and of being ready to every good word and work; all of which are just, beautiful, and indispensable in their proper place and order, but by him ignorantly

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ignorantly intended for the subversion of more sublime and momentous truths, or for substitution in their stead; and therefore are and can be by him only talked of, but never rightly and holily performed. He is dextrous in turning law into gospel, and gospel into law, or making an incoherent mixture of both, through his ignorance and inexperience of either. Such an one also is ever discoursing on the *reasonableness* of religion, which though it certainly cannot be irrational as flowing only from God's eternal wisdom; yet its reasonableness is not the ground of faith, but the divine testimony, which cannot be wrong, whether men comprehend it or not. Nor do believers receive it in the way of reason as curious or inquisitive speculatists, but by earnest and humble recumbence as perishing, helpless, sinners. The carnalist, because he is a carnalist, supposes on the contrary, that religion is to be primarily apprehended by the force of his own reason; that dark, corrupt, and fallen principle, which naturally opposes itself to the mind of God: and because he understands not the difference between those two very different principles, faith and reason, he ignorantly presumes, in direct opposition to the testimony of God, that there is no specific difference at all. Nay, a man of this kind will insist upon it, that faith is not opposite to reason, and that faith is nothing else but a peculiar exercise of reason; thereby confounding with a witness the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit, which the Holy Ghost led me, when I wrote my epistles, carefully to state and distinguish. Such people (as my brother *Luther* hath since observed) "cannot possibly have faith, when they cannot tell *what* it

it is, and much less can they teach it to others! and as for that which they seem to have, it is nothing else but a very dream, an opinion; and natural reason, but not faith."* Hence, as they proceed in their own spirit (for the Spirit of God always taught and teaches a different lesson,) they grow confident and puffed up in their own righteousness, wisdom, and strength; and when they are thus "at their best, then are they worst of all." The world adds oil to the flame:—"*O* these holy men, learned and devout: if these are not right, who are? if these cannot be saved, who shall?" And if some of the great men of my time, who vastly exceeded in holy appearance all the modern pharisees, could now appear in the world below; how uncharitable should I, and even my Master himself, be thought, if we should call them (as he did) *serpents, hypocrites, generation of vipers, who could not escape* (at least in that state which appears so fair to men) *the* very *damnation of hell?*"

Thief.—God indeed seeth not as man seeth: and how widely different do we ourselves view things, after we are brought out of the darkness of nature into the light of grace? Witness myself, who, in one hour, reviled my dear Redeemer, not knowing his person, and that he was dying for my sins; and, in another, saw him to be the Lord of life and glory, by whom alone I could be admitted into the kingdom of heaven.—And yet (O marvellous grace!) I, even I, came hither without one spot of sin; or, indeed, I could never have appeared in this pure region at all! How fully have I proved the efficacy of that divine blood, which could purge out

* On Gal. ii. 4, 5.

iniquity.

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iniquity like mine, and render my once dark and dismal soul whiter than snow! How can I testify enough of the sufficiency of that righteousness, by which I am not only brought into a pardoned state, but rendered immaculately holy, and perfectly like to my adorable Lord!—But proceed, my dear brother, in your discourse, which I am delighted to hear, as it illustrates the truth and manner of our Lord's salvation.

Paul.—The men, I have been speaking of, do not consider, that THEY WHO ARE IN THE FLESH, and under the life, wisdom, righteousness, as well as unrighteousness of it, CANNOT PLEASE GOD.* Of course, they make nothing of that *new birth*,† which our Lord himself declared to be indispensably necessary, and imagine it to be little more than a change of sentiment, a conviction of reason upon the obvious evidences of the gospel, or at most some little additional light, which men receive, and by which they have it now in their power, to ask for grace, and then to render themselves (perhaps with a little help) acceptable to God by their own diligence and activity.

Now, all this proceeds from the flesh: and you may be assured, that, when a man talks at this rate, the law of God, in its spirituality and holiness, hath never been applied by the divine Spirit to his conscience. He hath not duly felt the bitterness of sin, the deep depravity of his fallen nature, the plague of his own heart, the vile opposition of his own spirit to the ways and truth of God; nor yet, on the other hand, that weakness to do good, that aversion to will good, that inaptitude to think good,

* Rom. viii. 8. † John iii. 3. see ver 6.

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which sin hath brought upon men. No horrors have passed through his soul, respecting the wrath of God hanging over him; no contrition, which could melt his heart with sorrow, hath been known; no anxiety, which could disturb his rest for a single night or hour, hath ever molested him. These things, rather, are all strange or wild; and, most probably, he will revile them.—On the contrary; he is strong in the flesh, full of his own life and powers, prompt to determine, ready to execute. His speculations are all fair and pleasing; and his outward demeanour is, perhaps, so decent and regular, that he thinks it impossible (and probably others will support the opinion) that he should be so much and so deeply in the wrong.

Thief.—And perhaps it will be asked; Can such a man's life be thought more evil than mine was, or he himself be more distant from the kingdom of God?

Paul.—More evil to men it certainly is not, but yet more dangerous to himself. I know, with what caution this matter should be treated. There are people who are ready to say, and they said it in my time, that if, where sin abounds, grace can much more abound, it will be right for a man to sin that it may the more abound; and so, in this case, sin can do a believer no harm, but a great deal of good, both as it may promote the divine glory, and his own indulgence or advantage.—This is nearly like the argument of Satan with our Lord. "Cast thyself down, for thou shalt be supported according to the promise." And certainly such arguments and such practices deserve the best wages which satan has to bestow. The damnation of all perverters and abusers of the

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the tender mercy and free grace of God, is, beyond that of any other men, the most stupendous and just. Every real Christian feels the deepest awe and indignation at the very mention of such monstrous perversion of the divine goodness to the purposes of iniquity.

Thief.—Men, who hate, because they neither understand nor enjoy, the truth of God, will be ready to catch at any thing, which seems to wear the face of an objection; and therefore I may mention one other suggestion of the same kind. "If prayer and religious duties, performed by carnal men, have in them more of sin, because done in a pharisaic spirit, than the actions of the profligate committed with a publican's heart; it may seem right, either not to perform religious duties at all, or rather (as the lesser evil of the two) to indulge the desires of the flesh."

Paul.—This cavil is of the same stamp with the other, and a mere paralogism of the enemy of souls. *Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin;* and therefore the works of a faithless pharisee are undoubtedly sinful; and, if he finally stand upon them for his justification before God, will utterly condemn him. The foul publican sinner's works *go beforehand*, as it were, *to judgement.* Nobody, not even himself, attempts to justify him or them. The publican, therefore, and the pharisee will both merit and both find, if grace prevent not, an utter destruction. The comparison, in this case, which leaves both in hell, will be but of little consolation to either of these when there, and is widely different from the comparison of you and myself, in our former state, which has no object in it, but to testify, who hath been delivered from the deepest

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pit, and who consequently shall more exalt God's sovereign mercy.

And with respect to the use of prayers and other duties by unregenerate persons, the church of God and the ministry of the word are outwardly established, that all men may be called to all helps and means, and at the same time be cautioned not to put their trust in any thing they do, but simply and solely in Christ Jesus the Lord. And if, after all this, men will neglect these means, or serve themselves in a forbidden way, or pervert the wholesome truths of the word from food into poison, it will be finally to their own confusion and sorrow.

Men are indeed the worse for hearing the gospel itself, if not converted by it. *Chorazin*, *Bethsaida*, and *Capernaum*, will find their case at last more deplorable than than that of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, or of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. But was the word of truth notwithstanding to be restrained? Was it not still to be preached *to every creature?* The scorners and rejecters may finally say, it would have been better for them, if they had never heard it: and it would have been so. And so it would, that the scribes and pharisees had never known the true religion; because then they could not have abused it by long and lifeless doings of their own to final destruction. But the fault was not in the gospel, not in religion, not in prayers, not in any other acts of duty; but in their carnal hearts, which perverted them all from their precious use and design. And therefore, the argument drawn from the abuse against the use dissolves itself in this case, as it confessedly does in all others.

Thief.

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Thief.—I am sensible that these things are so, and that no man, who hath *tasted that the Lord is gracious*, can endure the thought of abusing his goodness. It may be right, therefore, for our brethren, yet upon earth, to be full of watchfulness and prayer, in order to keep their blessings from perversion; though I know very well, that it is not the man who hath been crucified whith Christ, having endured the pangs of the law, but the sinners who *are at ease in Zion*, and who never felt its piercing spirituality, that will abuse them.

Paul.—You speak my own sentiments clearly. No man (I speak with humble adoration to our Lord) no man was ever enabled to exalt Christ more by word or pen; none ever expressed more abhorrence and rejection of sin; than I have done. Nor did I ever speak a word, nor would I be understood to harbour a thought, against the decencies of human life, the practice of any thing profitable, no, nor even the least appearance of virtue. But, in order to confirm the appearance, I ever insisted upon the reality. For, however desirable the show may be for the benefit of others, and for the temporal life, there is a vast difference in the case, when it is to pass in review before God; by whom will be considered, not merely the thing done, but the motive for doing it; not simply the action, but the spirit and principle by which it was directed. One man may give ten thousand talents to the poor, and another only two mites; but the former, doing it from a wrong cause and to a wrong end, shall not be advantaged by the act for himself, however profitable it may be to others; while the latter, working by the Spirit of grace, and directing his purpose with a

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single eye to the glory of God, shall be blessed in his deed. It was right for the pharisee in the temple, and for all other men, to say, "God, I thank thee;" but when it was said, either without a true meaning, or for the false end of his own merit, it became abominable in the sight of HIM, whom he pretended to praise; and his thanks, as hollow and vile, were utterly rejected. One man may use the same words with another in prayer; but the *first*, praying with a *corrupt intention* or faithless mind, *his prayer shall be turned into sin;* while the last, submitting his soul through grace, or praying in the life of grace, his request shall be heard with delight, and his suit answered in due time. The same may be said of *all other duties* and services: *it is the justified state* and spirit of the person, not the outward form and appearance of the action, which render religious performances acceptable to God. Were it otherwise, the hypocrite or heretic would generally have much advantage of the real believer, who seldom makes so fair a *show in the flesh* as either of these, or, rather, who desires to make no show at all in the eyes of the world.

Thief.—For my part, I was taken so soon to heaven after my conversion, that I had no opportunity of testifying my faith and hope, but by a few words. However, I trust, that the grace, which so signally produced faith and hope, and gave ardour to those words, would also have brought forth all other its genuine fruits, if I had been continued longer in the world. Of one thing I am sure; I should never have prayed at all, had not my Lord in mercy touched my heart: nor could I have known to whom I prayed, or what to have prayed for, had

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had not his Holy Spirit so sweetly and suddenly converted my soul from the death of sin, and enlightened the eyes of my mind with the light of life. It was all of him, and none of myself, that I was plucked as *a brand from the burning*, just as I seemed to be dropping into the fire for ever.

Paul.—True; it was so. And can you suppose, that you could possibly have returned to your old way of thieving again, if you had been delivered from the cross; or, that you could have been pleased with the thought of sinning and sinning, that grace might abound and superabound?

Thief.—O horrible! what stab my Master again, and crucify him afresh! None but a devil could suggest the doctrine, none but his imps can put it in practice; and *damnation* is the *just* reward of both.*—*How can they*, as you have well observed, *who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* The believer is crucified with Christ, and no longer lives spiritually by the life of his own hand or power, but by the faith of the Son of God; or rather, he doth not so much live this life, as Christ in him:† and certainly the life of Christ can never lead a man to sin, which is a miserable deadness in itself, and the sure forerunner of death everlasting.

Paul.—You speak rightly, my brother. A formalist may rail against sin, because it produces temporal and threatens eternal evil; but the real believer is led to hate it for its own sake, abstracted from its future inconveniences or disasters: and this also constitutes another specific mark of difference between them. I may fur-

* Rom. iii. 8. † Gal. ii. 20.

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ther observe, that, if a carnal man pretend to fight against sin, and, presuming on his own strength and resolutions, should mortify his flesh like a *Bramin*, he is but a carnal man still, mere flesh, and *in the flesh:* and as no effect can rise above its cause, so whatever he does, or seems to do, is all from a foul and evil nature, a corrupt principle of *flesh and blood*,* and is nothing in itself but a *work of the flesh*, begun and ended in opposition to the divine will, word, and glory, however dressed or disguised. The regenerate person alone, through a help superior to that of nature, can truly detest, mortify, and subdue sin within himself, or *overcome the world* and satan without him. And this victory turns to a proof of his regeneration and union with Christ; because by this he shows, that he hath light, life, and strength, graciously derived from him. Thus he *delights in the law of God*, his rule of duty though not fount of life, *in the inner man*, and *rejoices in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh.* He is *under the law to Christ*, because it is altogether *holy, and just, and good;* though he is without the law in his conscience, when he pleads his justification before God, by whom he is accepted, not for works of righteousness which he hath done, or could do, but only through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ his Redeemer. This discernment between the offices of the law and the gospel, and the preservation of each in its proper place, are great and momentous points in Christian wisdom and experience, and especially in the hours of temptation and trial.

Thief.—This accounts for the joy, which many of our

* 1 Cor. xv. 50.

brethren

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brethren tasted in the world, while they found; *without, fightings; within, fears.* But for this mercy, and the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, they must have sunk under many a weight of woe. I myself had a short taste, a blessed glimpse of glory, before I entered within the vail.

Paul.—The more a man is beaten out of *himself* (and continual beating he wants too) the more he seeks after, and delights in, his Saviour. And in proportion also to the strength and depth of mens' convictions, under the fiery trial of God's law upon their consciences for the discovery of sin, all of which is effected by the agency of the divine Spirit; I say, in proportion to all this, is usually their measure of apprehension and delight in the free grace of God, entire recumbence upon it, and deliverance from those errors, which tend to darken or diminish it. Such men, having sorely smarted for sin and sinfulness, have commonly the greatest discoveries and detestation of the apostasy of their nature, and most of all others abhor the bare idea of abusing that mercy, which took the bitter pang from their hearts, and afforded them *joy and peace in believing.* The dry reasoners and mere speculatists, who never felt much, if any, of these things, are the people, who are most likely to find something good in self, and a little good in Jesus Christ, and to show and enjoy neither the one nor the other, in the conduct of their lips and lives.

Thief.—This reminds me of your promise, just now, of considering the true religion truly held and enjoyed, which you called the religion of the Spirit, in contradistinction

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distinction to the religion of the flesh, or even true religion professed by it.

Paul.—The religion of the Spirit, only God the Spirit begins in the soul. It is his *new creation in Christ Jesus.* The objects of his grace were spiritually dead even as others; mere *bones* without life, and (as God knows) very, very *dry.** Being dead, they were *polluted;* for death and pollution, in God's language, are nearly, and in a certain sense, relative and reciprocal ideas.† In this state they could not help themselves, nor desire help, nor had even the heart to call for it. But God, who is rich in mercy, *sent forth the Spirit of his Son, quickened them in Christ,* and gave them freely *a new birth unto righteousness.* For this purpose, the law was laid upon their old man of sin, condemned him for sin, made the conscience smart on account of it, terrified the soul with its danger, and brought it into distress for its safety. No help, no resource, appeared: every channel of hope was dry; and remorse, terror, bondage, and anxious despair, came with united weight to press down and torment the soul. All these are the usual pangs of spiritual and renewing life. And when the soul is thus humbled and brought low, circumcised or cut off from

* Ezek. xxxvii. 2.

† Lev. xxi. 1. Numb. v. 2. ix. 6.—Pollution entailed death and separation from God, unless expiation or atonement was made by the death of a substitute, who then received the pollution and its curse.—This was a part of the law ceremonial, preaching remission of sins by Jesus Christ, who for this end was *made sin* and a *curse* for his people. 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13. No pollution under the law was so great as that, which was contracted by the touch of the dead. See upon this subject, and for an answer to the *Socinians* from the law, Outram *de Sacrif.* l. i. c. 6. *& passim.*

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its rest in the old Adam or carnal nature; then the divine Spirit sets forth the love of Jesus, and the fitness, freeness, and ability of Jesus and his salvation, before the eyes of the now regenerating and enlightened mind. This he usually performs by the word of the gospel: and gospel, i. e. *good news*, it then becomes, to the recovering soul. The grace, which first leads to the view, leads also to the desire, of this mercy, in higher or lower degrees, according to his own dispensation. The power, which hath begun to work so much as this, *effectually works** to produce faith and confidence. The soul believes, and hopes, and loves, and embraces the free salvation of *Jesus*, with all the efforts of that renovated life, which the same *Jesus* by his Spirit constantly supplies and upholds. It is filled with astonishment and gratitude in the sense of the loving-kindness of God our Saviour, and is ready to cry out, upon the contemplation of his free and sovereign bounty, "Why me, Lord! why me? What am I, and what is my father's house, that thou shouldest bring me to this, and shouldest promise me, moreover, such good things to eternity, as pass man's understanding to conceive?" Then, in divine strength, he prays, and loves to pray, and praise, and does the will of God from the heart. Then it becomes his supreme delight to follow Jesus in all things as his bright example, as well as to live upon him for wisdom, righteousness, and redemption. And he wishes, with the warmest fervor of his soul, that no deed, no word, no, not so much as a thought, may pass through him or from him, which can, in any measure, disgrace his

* 1 Thess. ii. 13.

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Christian profession, or displease his Lord. He would even be perfection itself, for his Master's glory, and for the good of men. And he has nothing so much to bewail, as this; that the evil, dying, body, which he bears about with him, is so contrary to the law of his mind, that he cannot always do, nor at any time do perfectly, the things that he would. As he abhors the spirit of the pharisee, which would rob Christ of his redeeming glory; so he lothes that filth of corruption, which, while it pours contempt upon the just and good law, would turn the grace of God itself into the contradiction of licentiousness. And thus he walks on from day to day; living, in the denial of self and its corruptions, upon Christ for every thing; and desirous of receiving out of his fulness every grace, which can improve or adorn the Christian life, or manifest the divine glory.

Thief.—This, surely, is a very different statement of the matter from that, which represents man as the first mover, if not the prime agent, in his own salvation; the patrons of which opinion consistently make SELF the last great end. For my own part, though I was among what is called the scum and refuse of mankind, I had often enough heard, from those who knew our pharisees, that a good life (by which was meant the decent observation of moral duties) was the sure recommendation to the divine favour; but I never had any power or love for goodness or moral duty, till my dear Saviour looked upon me with ineffable mercy, when I was hanging by his side, and spake peace to my heart *by the blood of his cross.* His Holy Spirit then instructed me,

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me, that he was *my Lord and my God*, crucifying for my sins; and accordingly enabled me to pray, that I might have one kind thought of his holy remembrance, when he should come into his kingdom. I could not have seen, but by his divine tuition, that a crucified insulted Man, as he appeared to be, was LORD *over all*; and that this death of shame was the necessary passage, by which he would open an entrance for himself and his redeemed into glory.—In short, I think myself the most singular instance of divine benignity:—so singular, that (as a great christian, who lived an age or two after me, observed) there is my one case recorded, of such a sinner pardoned in a dying hour, that none might despair; and but one, that none might presume.*

Paul.—True, my brother: thou lovedst him, because he first loved thee, and ordained thee to be the first distinguished pledge of his victory over the powers of

* Bp. HALL likewise descants on this subject, in the following devout apostrophe:—"O Saviour, what a precedent is this of thy free and powerful grace! *Where* thou wilt give, what unworthiness can bar us from mercy! *When* thou wilt give, what time can prejudice our vocation! Who can despair of thy goodness; when he, that in the morning was posting towards hell, is in the evening with thee in paradise?—Lord, he could not have spoken this to thee, but by thee and from thee. What possibility was there for a thief to think of thy kingdom without thy Spirit? That good Spirit of thine breathed upon this man—breathed not upon his fellow. The trade was alike; their sin was alike; their cross alike: only thy mercy makes them unlike. One is taken; the other refused. Blessed be thy mercy in taking one: blessed be thy justice in leaving the other. Who can despair of that mercy? Who cannot but tremble at that justice?" *Contempl. on the Crucifixion.*

darkness.

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darkness. It was the same divine power, which reached your heart and mine, and without which we both must have perished; *you* in the pollution and mischief of the beast, and *I* in the pride and rebellion of the devil. You were and are greatly indebted to him. I mean not to deny or to lessen the importance of the mercy which saved you. But, after all, the eminence of the blessing is undoubtedly mine. Your case indeed was *singular*, and not to be drawn into example for the rest of mankind; whereas mine was ordained for *a pattern for them who should hereafter believe*. You had nothing to trust in of your own, and accordingly had no false foundation to be removed: I depended upon a thousand things beside Christ, and was commended, encouraged, and hardened in that dependence; and I had also many a *refuge of lies* to be swept away. You had no opposition, but a dull, gross carnality against God: I had a more subtle and direct enmity, kindled into rage and sublimated by pride, through the influence of that evil one, to whom I was assimilated in his fairest form of an angel of light. You gave up all resistance against your Saviour in a moment; I sustained a conflict of three days and nights, and he knows how often beside, before I could utterly renounce myself, and take my *Jesus* for my all in all. O then never contend any further upon this point with me; but own, that I am at once in myself *less than the least of all saints*, and the very *chief of sinners;* and that consequently I am one of the most extraordinary instances, if not the most extraordinary instance itself,* of the extent,

* 1 Tim. i. 16.

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the riches, and free favour of the divine attributes, which ever could be shown to a poor, wretched, worthless, undone creature. We will magnify the Lord together most joyfully; but still the longest and the loudest note shall be mine.

Thief.—I grant, dear *Paul*, that the view you have even now of your being the *the least of all saints* is a sublimity of grace and glory, which God, who speaketh not after the false conceptions of men, hath bestowed upon you. The lowest in self is the highest in Christ, even here. They, who have most received, are certainly most in debt to the divine mercy. The first of God's creatures, enjoys nothing by right, but every thing by bounty. The sense of this is the suppression of pride, and the exaltation of humility. Indeed, the deepest humility is the most exalted grandeur in these courts of heaven. None of God's creatures therefore are or can be so humble as himself; because none, in the comparison, can stoop so low. You called yourself *the chief of sinners*, because you saw and felt most of the enormity which is in sin, and especially in your own sin: and you triumph now, as before, in your meanness; because most eminently the power and glory of your dear Lord appear in you and upon you. I follow you in my humble measure of praise, and shall never cease to adore that precious mercy, which delivered me in my forlorn condition, and brought me to such company as your's, and to so bright a place in this heaven of glory.

Paul.—My dear brother, I rejoice in your happiness, as in my own; and I bless our dear Redeemer for his kindness

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kindness and mercy, which snatched you from the very jaws of hell, and carried you up hither as a first-fruit of his victorious redemption. Come then, and let us cast our crowns together before his sacred feet, and acknowledge, with all this innumerable company, that HE *only is worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing; for He only redeemed us all to God by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and made us unto our God kings and priests, to live and to reign with him for ever and ever!* Amen; Hallelu-JAH!

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DE ORIGINE ANIMÆ;

OR,

AN ESSAY IN PNEUMATOLOGY.*

I AM much pleased with a reflection of M. *Rollin*, in his treatise of *the Arts and Sciences of the Antients:* "The manner (says that amiable author) in which the sin of *Adam* extended down to me, is covered with obscurities. But, from that very point, wrapt up in darkness, issues the light which makes all clear, and dispels all my difficulties. I am therefore far from refusing to believe one only thing, of which the belief is rewarded by the understanding of so many others; and chuse rather to submit my reason to a single article, which it does not comprehend, but which is revealed, than to make it fly out against an infinity of others which it comprehends as little, and of which divine revelation

* This essay in M.S. gave occasion, some years ago, to an amicable controversy between a late reverend gentleman, well known in the religious world, and the author. It is upon a subject, which will perhaps always remain for the exercise of opinion, rather than of faith. Men, who have united in principles of higher consequence, have differed in this; and so *vice versa*. It may serve however for an innocent speculation, and is here published with no other view. Themes of this kind should certainly be proposed with diffidence, urged with modesty, and considered with candour. A calm investigation becomes truth, and is the only legitimate mean for its discovery or exhibition.

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neither forbids us the examination, nor removes the difficulties." Vol. iii. P. 304. To this let me add, to the same effect, an excellent sentiment from the pious Mr. *Flavel*, in the preface to his very valuable *Treatise on the Soul of Man*: "I groan under the effects of *Adam's* itching ambition *to know*; and would not, by repeating his sin, increase my own misery: nor yet would I be scared, by his example, into the contrary evil of neglecting the means God hath afforded me, to know all that I can know of his revealed will."

As these sentences express what I would wish to premise, and in better terms than my own; I will immediately descend to my subject, which I mean to consider with the utmost diffidence, caution, and brevity.

A doubt hath been frequently started, whether the transmission of Adam's sin to his posterity, both as to its defilement and punishment, consists with any known principles of either natural or spiritual reason; or whether it is not to be entirely received, among other mysteries, as an object of pure faith, upon the veracity of the divine record, without attempting an explication. It is beyond a doubt, that the testimony of God demands the implicit assent and belief of every Christian: but, at the same time, it rather authorizes than forbids him, as a man, to search and enquire (like the *noble Bereans*) with all the faculties and opportunities conferred upon him, into the collateral evidences of that testimony, so far as they are the objects of those faculties; so that by perceiving and knowing the truth of the things comprehensible, he may have an improved and firmer conviction of these revealed truths, which (at least in this life) must

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must remain always incomprehensible. Thus our blessed Saviour often appealed to the mind and senses of his hearers; and thus, likewise, as his apostle declares, *the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.* Where God hath declared any proposition, which, by its sublime nature, rises above the intellect of man; it is to be received as an infallible truth without question or hesitation, because it would be irrational to doubt an unerring intelligence. But where he hath not revealed himself upon any mode or circumstance which may occupy men's thoughts, and which therefore cannot be essential to salvation, as nothing of that kind is hid; they may exagitate and resolve upon any question with innocence and profit, if attempted with due humility and submission both of reflection and expression.

Agreeably to these principles, when I consider the progress and order of nature, or that rule by which all things appear to exist and proceed, and how the Almighty permits or designs, by a conduct so invariable as to seem like necessity, that certain definite causes shall be succeeded by effects equally certain and definite; and that God, having established a mode in creation, by a concourse or series of providences, without any new natural creation, enables that mode to multiply from itself: I am not astonished, with any ineffable wonder, that my frame of soul and body should have derived the taint and malady of sin and evil, in all their latitude of degree and consequence, nor yet in the order of their communication to me.—God hath established the principles, by or out of which every effect and

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phœnomenon in the universe of things are produced, and which are therefore rightly enough denominated *second causes;* that is, causes which, being once ordained, do, without any new creative act of the divine power, perform effects (as it were) *ex se*, which to these, as to their subordinate origin, have an essential correspondence or similarity. These secondary agents in nature are the visible signs of an invisible power, and therefore confirm the piety of that doctrine, which submits allthings to a *particular* as well as to a *general* providence. Our mathematicians, who are so fond of sensible demonstration in all things, might apply that principle with some advantage here: for, if no whole can be such without its constituent parts, or no multiplied number be complete but in the possession of every unit; there can be no general arrangement without a series or direct application of all its particulars. If the great things (or such as we think to be great) are not to break order; how are the little to proceed but by rule? And if little things tumble into confusion, as they must without the force of order; how are the great things, which are composed of the little, without the same order to keep their ground? In a word, the atheism of the distinction is not supportable by common sense, and merits ridicule rather than a serious answer. Human infidelity (not to say, absurdity) could alone have raised that distinction; for that power, which is never no where, must be present every where; and consequently its particular and general potency is one and the same. In plainer phrase; as by God all things *exist*, and exist in modes according to his will; so, by him alone, do they *subsist*, in the actuality and duration

duration of those modes. He hath not only established all *order*, but all the *execution* and *final causes* of order. For this, he is divinely celebrated in the cxlvii. psalm.

What are the productions of vegetables and animals, but the exercises or effects of causes, prior indeed to them, yet secondary and subordinate to Him, who only did and could establish them?

Plants and trees (as botanists tell us) contain the *entire fabric*, and therefore the *radices*, *stamina*, or principles (call them as we may) *necessary to produce* the entire fabrics of their proper successors in their respective seeds. And this efficacy of production in the several species from seed to seed, involving and involved, seems established in every series *ad infinitum*, beyond all the perception and comprehension of man. The various *species* and *genera* remain, from age to age, invariably the same, have the same peculiarities of form and property, and, under the auspices of divine Providence, transmit them downward invariably to their offspring.

This exactness of example (if so precise an order can be called example) appears likewise among the animal tribes. The fierceness of the lion, the rapacity of the wolf, the venom of the serpent, are physically to be deduced, as well as their forms, from the immediate procreant of each species, up to the primary procreant at the creation. Nor can any artifice eradicate the distinguishing properties of the respective animals, however it may tame or confine them; nor mingle and confound the several species, so as to multiply them into new orders of being. A mule is the proof of an attempt to pervert the order of succession; but a mule is also an

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example, which shows, that the attempt can succeed no farther, and that the established order is absolutely impervertible. Will any one say, that the difference of animal qualities arises from the different position or conformation of the atoms, which compose their material substances? If the qualities can be supposed to be inherent or co-existent with the atoms; or, if these were capable of reason and volition, and could enter into a compact of wisdom, for which purpose each atom must contain in itself a portion of intellect; it might be so: but then the atoms must, in that assumption, be supposed very *dissimilar* in order to produce the great varieties of being which every where surround us; whereas no difference or distinction could ever be discovered between the atoms of one animal and those of another; nor yet perhaps of any other substances, which either have or have not been actuated with intelligence or life. Besides; it is clear enough, that no properties of matter, however subtle or however moved, such for instance as those of the magnet or the electric fluid, which perhaps are the most subtle of any, have the least approach to thought or ratiocination, more than the grossest about us. The propagation, therefore, of the several kinds of being must be esteemed something more than the dull and senseless propagation of matter; unless it can be said, without great absurdity, that matter contains in itself all sorts of passions and affections, or that, by any collision or adhesion, it can arrange itself or be arranged into such modifications as may produce them. In opposition to this, we know, that a mere carcase, in which all the atoms are completely organized or combined,

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bined, is absolutely inert and unempassioned, if it hath not that inexplicable principle super-added, which we denominate LIFE. We know also, that this life does not exist in each individual or distinct atom, but in a combination of the atoms into regular forms, and that this combination is produced with a correctness of purpose and intention, which invincibly argues the superior influence and operation of spirit or mind. But, if the traduction of passions or powers proceed from a more refined principle than that of body with its atoms; and if the dispositions, good or bad, descend as an inheritance through all the several species of brutes, upon this common and universal principle, that *like shall produce like;* we may extend our observations to the highest rank of animal being, and perhaps trace out the transmission of something peculiar to ourselves. Adam *begat a son in his own likeness, after his image.* This was posterior to his fall; and, therefore, he not only begat a creature of like form with himself in body, but of like depravity with himself in mind. It was the soul of *Adam* which sinned, and, in sinning, employed the instrumentality of his body, which of itself could not sin at all; and it was his soul, which by the same instrumentality conveyed the contamination and the curse of death and sin to all his posterity. He was made originally *in the image and after* (or according to) *the likeness of God;* and this image and likeness, had he never sinned, he would naturally or necessarily have conferred upon his offspring. But was this an image or likeness of *body* only, of mere *animal frame*, of low *terrestrial matter?*— God is a spirit, infinitely remote from all corporeity;

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and therefore the likeness could only be spiritual, consisting of similar, though very inferior or subordinate, attributes of mind. Consequently, the propagation of *Adam's* unfallen likeness would have been the propagation of unfallen spirit or mind. The body also would have enjoyed its peculiar blessings; yet not merely as body or matter, but because of its union or connection with an happy and immaculate soul.

When *David* bewailed his corruption in his fifty-first psalm, it can scarcely be doubted, that he viewed the infection of sin both in body and mind; and he certainly makes no distinction, in the expression of his sorrow, concerning the depravity of either, or the source of both. *Behold* (says he) *I was shapen* [Mont. *genitus sum*] *in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;* יחמתני *warm me*, i. e. with life, without which there is no warmth; and this subsists in bodies actuated by spirit, which is the very essence or principle of life. Reflecting therefore on the radical apostasy of his whole nature, which he deduces entirely from his *generation* and *conception*, he earnestly and consistently prays for the grace of the Holy Spirit to effect its renovation.

We have now, in our view, the cause and course of human sin. *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men,* ᾧ, *in whom all have sinned.* Sin, being in the soul, is transmitted from the soul; and thus men become partakers of *Adam's* transgression. There are *sins of the mind*, and of the mind only, above all relation whatever to the body; and therefore the body, as body, could not impart them; and if it could not impart them of itself

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to its own proper soul, it seems impossib , that Adam's body alone should transfuse them to the souls of others; as those persons are obliged to suppose, who believe, that God is continually creating pure spirits, only to occupy vile and polluted frames of clay. How nearly this opinion must charge the Author of all good with the *origin* and *continuance* of all evil, should be well considered by those who maintain it.

There have been undoubtedly men of the greatest learning, judgement, and piety, of this last persuasion, who seem chiefly to have adopted it in order to maintain the perfect incorporeity and immortality of the soul; but the persuasion neither appears absolutely necessary to this incontrovertible principle, nor sufficiently solves the extreme difficulty, which is consequent upon that persuasion; namely, how matter can either be the first agent in sin, or the communicating agent of sin, to an unspotted soul. Their hypothesis, that every spirit or soul, actuating body or matter, is a new creation, an empsychosis, or infusion, in the very instant of union with the preparing form, seems to render God an agent in the defilement of the more exalted part of our nature on the one hand, and, on the other hand, raises the potency of dead and inert matter above the vigor of active spirit or mind; though it is evident to our senses, and confessed by every one, that matter without spirit, under any form or combination, is absolutely passive and incapable of thought or exertion.

There are few authors, I believe, who have considered this subject with more modesty, piety, and care, than the excellent and learned Mr. *Flavel*. He hath met it upon

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upon plain ground, and, like a wise and temperate christian, seems sincerely bent to discover and maintain the truth. It is with regret, when one differs from such men: but it is a consolation, that the difference doth not affect the vitals of religion. He is persuaded, "that the soul receives not its being by traduction or generation: for that which is generable is also corruptible: but the spiritual, immortal soul is not subject to corruption." This is an argument drawn from the Platonists, and some of the schoolmen. *Thomas Aquinas* hath treated it with his usual metaphysical subtilty. But it doth not appear convincing; for the same argument equally concludes against the incorruption and immortality of every thing *created*. If *the beginning to be* is to be taken for a proof of a certain *end to existence*; then all things and beings, whether angels or spirits, and the mansions of the blest, must one day determine and cease. Creation is the beginning of existence; and generation, which is but the continuance of created order, is the same. The *human* nature of our blessed Redeemer had a beginning, and, though not in the course of natural generation, yet a *generated* one;* for his rank of gene-

* "*Adam's* soul was *created*, and not *generated*: our souls are *generated*, and *not merely created of nothing*; that is, God, as the *fountain* of natural being, giveth multiplied essences wholly from himself; yet not as he first created things of nothing, but by an incomprehensible influence on and use of the *generating souls*, which, under God, have a causality in the multiplication. But *Christ's* soul was neither merely generated, nor merely created, so far as it was conceived by the *Holy Ghost*; and yet there was a participation of generation, so far as there was a concourse of the Virgin's soul. And by this wonderful conception, *Christ* was free both from the *guilt* and *corruption* of original sin. For though he

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ration is expressly set down to prove him to be the *offspring* of *Abraham* and of *David*: but who will suppose, that, for this reason, contrary to the voice of the scripture, it shall ever have an end? No: *He will be the everlasting* SAME, *and his years shall not fail.*

Indeed, our notions of the *vis activa*, or efficient cause in the generation of all things, even of the grossest and most common substances, are too imperfect and superficial to be reasoned from. And could we decide in the case, with tolerable precision, upon *matter*; it might well be doubted how far we should have a right, from thence, to conclude for *spirit*. But so remote are we in our knowledge of the first principles in this subject, that we cannot exactly account for their apparent activities and sensible effects. No man can define the bond of connexion between soul and body, nor the instantaneous impressions and force of the one upon the other, nor the growth and expansion of the body from infancy to manhood, and much less the growing intellect and spiritual expansion of the soul. How then are we to draw arguments from these, or from any thing else of a material nature, in order to conclude upon the modes of spiritual existence, of which in our present gross, fallen, and compounded state we must ever remain ignorant? We cannot enter deeply into causes: it is sufficient exercise for our faculties to state effects. And the effects, in the

he be called *the Son of David*, and of *Man*, totally as a man, and not as to his flesh alone; yet was he not so by a proper and full generation, as others are; but the *Spirit's* creative conception made him, even as to his humanity, more eminently *the Son of God*, than *the Son of Man*." BAXTER: *Poor Man's Family Book, p.* 445,

subject

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subject before us, appear very strongly in favour of that position, which maintains the traduction of sin from the body and soul of our first parent, in the way of natural generation, to the bodies and souls of all his posterity. The fact of depravity is undeniably marked by all its unhappy effects upon the two constituents of our nature: and it seems difficult to give a satisfactory reason, why we are to seek a separate channel for the communication of either. At least, it will be time enough to say, that a spirit *cannot* be generated, when it is discussed, how body becomes the seed of body, and by an excision of itself, yet without any loss of its form, can produce a similar, and at the same time a separate existence, for ever incapable of re-union.

We are told, that the *Magi* used to term the union of soul and body *the mixture of light and darkness:* it is truly so, and in more senses than one.*

There is a scripture, which I do not recollect to have been noticed by any author, but which I presume may be brought into some relation to our present subject. I do not insist upon it but rather propose it; because the scriptures were not intended to teach us metaphysics, but something better. The people of God, from the beginning, were commanded to abstain from eating blood; and the reason given is, *because the blood is the life,* and *the life of the flesh is in the blood.*† I do not

* Galæ in *Iambl.* sect. i. c. 2. † Lactantius, in speaking of those philosophers, who maintained that the blood was the very soul, hath this expression: *Videtur anima similis esse lumini, quæ non ipse sit sanguinis, sed humore sanguinis alitur, ut lumen oleo.* De Opif. Dei. §. 17.

apprehend

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apprehend the words to signify, that blood, simply, is life; because blood is material, and life is of an æthereal and spiritual nature: but that the blood is the receptaculum and conduit of all those animal spirits, which form, "not only the soul itself (as bishop *Berkeley* expresses it,) but the interior tunicle of the soul, the *aurai simplicis ignem*, or (as he afterwards calls it) the immediate vehicle of the soul."* Now, we know that the *semen* of all animals is a wonderful composition of their blood, and intended for the increase of their several species. If life, then, be in the blood, we are sure, by its effects, it is also in the *semen* made from it.† But blood is not life, nor yet is the *semen* life: the one, at most, is but the residence, as the other is only the vehicle, of that superior and spiritual principle. Upon this delicate

* Siris, §. 204. † Sennertus, the learned physician, attempted much towards the investigation of this abstruse subject. I take the following quotation of his sentiments from one of his own profession: *Posuit* [*viz.* Sennertus] *pro fundamento, omnium animalium semen, virtute benedictionis divinæ, esse animatum, i. e. eadem impregnatum anima, quæ futuræ proli inest: hinc que vel animam hominis rationalem (cunctorum quæ creata sunt ens nobilissimum, ac divini particeps consilii) in semine ejus præsentem esse, non veritus est asserere; itemque animam pulli in ovo delitescere; animamque una cum semine in uterum genitricis transmitti; atque ex isto utriusque sexus semine (ut flamma flammæ) conjuncto, animaque prædito, perfectum animal emergere.*

Dr. *Charlton*, after opposing this opinion of *Sennertus*, explains his own; which is, that the soul is not *infused* from God; and that the *fœtus*, neither in body nor soul, *constituitur ex semine, ceu principio materiali*, but both are produced by the power of God, in an inscrutable way, as in the generation of vegetables or other animals.—*Tunc, de semine quæratur, Cui bono?* And, how became either body or soul affected with *evil? Oecon anim. p.* 284.

subject,

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subject, I had rather use other words than my own. "It is probable (says Mr. *Parkhurst,*) that, in the generation of animals, the male and female seed are really, though in an unknown manner, mixed, and *both together contribute to the production of the fœtus*, which, from the time of conception, gradually dilates and expands, till it bursts its prison, and afterwards comes to the proper size of the species. This account of animal generation is, I apprehend, as far as it goes, perfectly agreeable to the scriptures; where we find the descendants of a woman called *her seed*, as well as those of a man called *his seed*." If the animal life can be thus transfused, who will venture to say, that the intellectual soul, which resides in it, may not be transmitted at the same time; especially as this psychogenesis, or generation of spirit, removes the difficulty of our original corruption, not only of body, but of mind; and facilitates our understanding those passages of scripture, which relate to our own existence, or the existence of others, in ages before we were born? See Rom. ix. 11, &c. 1 Cor. xv. 22. Heb. vii. 9, 10.

But "it is not imaginable (says Mr. *Flavel*) how a soul should be produced out of matter, which is not endued with reason; or how a bodily substance can impart that to another, which it hath not itself." From what hath been said, perhaps, this objection is removed; for it is not pretended, that matter produces soul, which is not of its own essence. But animated matter may generate animated matter; or soul and body, *semel et simul*, may procreate soul and body, according to God's arrangement in all other things.

"If it be said (Mr. *Flavel* urges) that the soul of the child

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child proceeds from the soul of the parents; *that cannot be;* for spiritual substances are impartible, and nothing can be exscinded from them. And it is absurd (he goes on, quoting the passage from *Zanchius)* to think the soul of *Adam* should spring from one original, and the souls of all his offspring from another, whilst both his and their's are of one and the same nature and species." The first sentence begs the question. If it can be proved, that the generation of the soul *cannot be;* there would be an end of the controversy: and the same with respect to the impartibility of spirit. But who can determine this so positively? The propagation of flame from flame is carried on without any diminution of the original fire; but the mode of this action is not easily to be explained, if at all: and, if matter itself can increase with so much subtilty, as eludes all investigation; shall we deny the possibility of this in a transcendent and more rarefied nature? We may, therefore, say, and perhaps without presumption, that, with respect to the supposed indivisibility, or rather eduction, of spirit, as no human mind can conceive or explain how the *part* of one animal substance becomes the *whole* of another, while the part carries no sort of resemblance to that whole, which notwithstanding is an indisputable fact; so it appears unreasonable to demand a clear explanation of the *modus generandi* in spirit, of whose properties we are abundantly more ignorant, while we are certain, that the *kind* of spirit in the generating animal is as much consimilar with that in the animal generated, as are the outward lineaments of their bodies.

If body generated body without the energy of spirit; then

then the hypothesis of the corporal nature being the root and ground of sin, and the sole vehicle of its transfusion to posterity, would seem more probable. But then again it would be hard to account for the iniquity we find in spirit, both in the human and infernal, which has no relation to body, and which is constantly transacted without it.

If the corruption of human nature be carried down merely from body to body; is it in the least reconcileable to the wisdom and goodness of God to suppose, that he continually creates innocent and pure souls for such a situation, as must necessarily place them in the road to eternal destruction? To say, as *Aquinas* doth, *melius est sic esse secundum naturam quam nullo modo esse*,* implies a boldness which is not to be justified, when it is remembered, that our Lord declared concerning a person in a state of dereliction, *It had been good for that man, if he had never been born.*

As the body returns to the dust, from which it was taken; so the spirit ascends to God, who originally created it, and whose image it bears. But this only specifies the sublime nature of the human soul, and cannot affect the question before us, as I presume, in any respect. It doth not lose, but continue its nature, by traduction; whereas the contrary opinion supposes, that God is ever creating new and new spirits out of nothing, only to inform sinful, wretched, and corrupting bodies. *The Lord stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth, and formed the spirit of man within him,* Zech. xii. 1 as his one great work of creation, and then *rested from* ALL HIS WORK *which he had made*, Gen. ii. 3.

* *Sum. Theol.* Iæ Sec. Quæst. 83.

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Great stress hath been laid upon this last cited text of Zech, xii. 1. and upon Eccles. xii. 7. and especially upon Heb. xii. 9. but, nothwithstanding, it is with all deference apprehended, that these passages do not relate to the intrinsic merits of the question on either side.

With respect to the first; that *God formeth the spirit of man within him*, it may be observed, with equal truth, that he doth the same to his body without him: for (says the Psalmist) *My substance* [i. e. of bone, or body] *was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret*, &c. And, again, *Thy hands have made me and fashioned me*, Ps. cxxxix. 15. and cxix. 73. There are many other scriptures to the same purpose: but it is not necessary to quote them, for surely nobody will deny that *God created all things*. This is not the *elenchus* of the subject. The prophet is evidently stating God's power in the first creation, and places with it the forming of man's spirit, as an act of the same power, and (if the tenses be observed) of the *same time*. If there be any relation, therefore, in the text, to our present matter, it concludes against the opposite opinion; unless it can be explained, that God is NOW *stretching forth the heavens, and* NOW *laying the foundations of the earth*, as he is NOW supposed to be *creating souls*.

As to the text of Eccles. xii. 7. it fairly implies, that, at death, the two grand constituents of man's nature return to their *first principles*; the dust to the earth, and the spirit to God, who originally breathed it into man. There is no controversy here but with atheists. The text concludes nothing in the topic before us, because

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it doth not state any time concerning the communication of the spirit to the body.

But the greatest dependence hath been made upon the term FATHER *of spirits* applied to God, and upon the antithesis to *fathers of our flesh*, which occur in Heb. xii. 9. "Here (it hath been observed) it seems evident, that our souls flow not to us in the material channel of fleshly generation or descent, as our bodies do, but immediately from God their proper father, in the way of creation." To this, it may be answered, in the first place, that the term *father*, applied to God in this case, doth not mean his *generation* of souls out of his own proper substance, but solely his *creation* of them, as of all other things: and, in this sense, he is the *father* of the dew, Job xxxviii. 28. and the father of our *bodies*. Thus says *Isaiah*: O LORD, *thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter, and we all are the work of thy hand*, Isa. lxiv. 8. So another prophet inquires, *Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?* Mal. ii. 10. The word *Father*, therefore, can only mean here the same as *Creator*, and respects God's work of original creation, and not the present time; unless it can be proved (contrary to the scripture,) that his *works* [i. e. of *creation*] *were* NOT *finished from the foundation of the world*; and that *God did* NOT *rest the seventh day from all his works*, or cease to act in creation. There is indeed another kind of work, concerning which (as our Lord says) *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*; but this wholly and solely relates to the purposes of salvation, and, in no one instance, to what is properly called *creation*, or making beings out of nothing. And this

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this work, respecting man, is not applied to the *generation* of the soul, but its *regeneration*, or *renewal* in Christ Jesus.

As to the antithesis, if the impartial reader will carefully view the whole scope and context of the passage, he may possibly own, that it turns upon no such point as is alledged, but upon one of a very different kind. The apostle is speaking of the trials and afflictions of God's people, as permitted and exercised by him; and he draws this argument of consolation for them, from the practice of earthly parents towards their children; that as these corrected their offspring with a fatherly chastisement, and yet *received reverence*, from the conviction that it could not proceed from hatred, but love; so God, his people's *heavenly Father*, their Father in *divine and spiritual things*, their *everlasting Father* in Christ which is at once the most glorious and most gracious sense of the term, only chastened them *for their profit*, that *they might be partakers of his holiness*; and that, therefore, their very *life* consisted in a due *subjection* to him. This appears to be the precise intention of the apostle's argument; and it is rather surprising, how men of learning and piety, in order to bolster up a subject of their own opinion, should have wrested these words in support of it; when it is hardly possible, that St. *Paul* could have any thing in view, which seems altogether so much out of his way, as the question under consideration.

St. *Austin** and others have asserted, in order to

* *De Genesi*, lib. x.

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avoid an inconsistency, which they do not always avoid, that the body may sin without the concurrence of the soul; because the apostle says, *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit.* But this is an *ignoratio elenchi;* for the apostle means, by the *flesh*, what he calls in another place *the carnal mind*, φρονημα της σαρκος, the minding of the flesh, or the act of the mind in and for the flesh, which is opposed to the Spirit of God, because it *is enmity* itself *against him. It will not be easy to conceive*, how body, as such (which is what St. *Austin* states,) can exercise enmity, or possess it, in the sense of the apostle, who evidently refers it to the carnality of the mind.

But *Austin* himself, in another place, sets this matter right. He tells us plainly, that the sin of man did not originate from his body only, but also from his soul; that the flesh is often put for the whole man, in the scriptures; and that, for this reason, even the sins of the mind are frequently attributed to the flesh. Nay, further, he affirms, that the principle of sin came from the soul, and not from the body. *Corruptio corporis* (says he) *quæ aggravat animam, non peccati primi est causa, sed pœna: nec caro corruptibilis animam peccatricem, sed* ANIMA PECCATRIX *fecit esse* CORRUPTIBILEM CARNEM.† In short, it is not easy to reconcile this excellent father to himself, upon his hypothesis; and it is far less easy, in my humble opinion, to reconcile the hypothesis itself to some fundamental doctrines of the Bible.

† *De Civit. Dei.* c. 2, 3. Here *Tertullian* will agree with him; for he tells us, that when the *flesh* is charged with sinfulness in the scripture, it is because the soul cannot commit many sins without its instrumentality, such as drunkenness, murder, and the like. *De Anima*, c. 40.

There

There is also an indecency in supposing God to be constantly creating souls, in consequence of the appetites of fallen man, even when those appetites are lawful: but what may it be called, when men venture to charge the HOLY ONE with co-operating in sinful or adulterous connexions, by infusing souls into their issue; when he himself has branded such issue with infamy, in the volume of his own inspiration? Deut. xxiii. 2. And, further, in both cases, doth it not too far approach the opinion, which represents God as acting in a kind of subservience to sinful creatures?

Nobody will say, perhaps, that the command, *Increase and multiply*, was addressed only to mere matter, which can neither hear, nor see, nor understand, nor obey, of itself: but if it was equally directed to spirit informing that matter, then it will follow, either that spirit increases and multiplies in consequence of the divine command; or that it disobeys, by incapacity, the positive injunction of the divine will; or that, so far as relates to the spirit, the precept was given in vain.

I am not charmed with the force or propriety of the following remark, nor of the quotation which supports it: "There is no *matter*, *seed*, or principle of *souls*, *found in man*; and to be sure (as *Baronius* strongly argues) he [man] cannot produce a soul without præexistent matter; for that were to make him omnipotent, and assign a creating power to a creature."* I do not comprehend how the *matter* or *seed* of souls exists, and much less how it is to be *found* in man. I cannot *see* a soul (as this position, if it imply any thing, seems to

* FLAVEL, ubi supra, p. 39.

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imply,) and much less its generating principle. The reverend author could not possibly imagine, that any one would hunt after this, as though it were gross and sensible matter, with a miscroscope. It may be allowed easily, that there is no such thing to be brought into ocular view, either from the *glandula pinealis*, the *os sacrum*, or any other imaginary seat of the soul.* And as to *Baronius's* argument, it concludes against his own notion of the production of the human body, as strongly as against the traduction of the human soul. It seems as possible for parents to form the one as the other.

Nor am I enlightened by the method of accounting for sinful traduction, by the *physical agency* of the body upon the mind, "as a rusty scabbard infects and defiles a bright sword sheathed therein:" but I am absolutely enveloped with darkness, when I am told, that it is "by way of *ineffable resultancy and emanation*;" or that "it is not propagated from body to body, nor yet from soul to soul, but from man to man," *i. e.* [illegible]

It is not said, not even by *Tertullian*, who speaks (according to his usual style) as boldly upon the subject as any one, that the body produces the soul, or that one soul *creates* another; but (says he) *et* NATAM [*animam*] *docemus, et* FACTAM *ex initii constitutione.*†

In a word, the difficulty of explaining the *modus generandi* cannot fairly conclude against its existence; for we cannot explain many things, which we know to be true: it is sufficient, if, by this hypothesis, we can

* If *Lewenhoeck's* system of the *Animalculæ* be right; it may be asked, What is the life which informs them?

† *De Anima.* c. 4.

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set in a stronger light the justice and goodness of God, and the order and œconomy of his providence, in the world about us. Whatever doth not illustrate these grand principles, can hardly be esteemed proper or true.

Where appears the *justice* of God in entailing the lapse of the *spirit of Adam*, and only on account too of an earthly dying *carcase*, upon an *immortal spirit newly created*, and which, for that very reason, could have had no *natural relation* to him? It is poor to say with *Baronius*, that "God creates our souls neither *morally* pure, nor impure, and that they receive neither purity nor impurity from him, but only their naked essence, and the properties flowing from it."* The truth is, the argument, to which this assertion is opposed, is a two-edged sword; and this is something like the answer of the Pharisees to *Christ* (Matt. xxi. 25, &c.) in order to ward off its blow. But it is incapable; for, if the soul be *pure* in the fœtus, it hath *no relation* to *Adam*, and seems therefore strangely connected with his sin and sinful condition: and, if it be *impure*, it cannot be a *new creation* from God. *Baronius* only avoids the dilemma, by representing the Almighty constantly employed in making *nothings*: as those must be, which are neither *pure* nor *impure*. It is impossible to conceive of a living and spiritual essence without *qualities*.

Neither philosophy nor scripture warrant this debasement of the mind, and these excessive ascriptions to the potentiality of matter.

The œconomy of divine providence; every-where

* FLAVEL, ubi supra.

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displayed, not in producing new creations (at least in our sytem,) but in propagating those already created by a wonderful contrivance out of themselves; justifies the doctrine of the soul's traduction. We know, that spiritual things in other cases proceed *pari passu* with the natural, which are but their sensible types and patterns; and why God should break through the wise and universal order he has established, only in this particular instance, is a problem yet to be explained.

It hath been repeatedly contended, that whatever is generable must therefore be corruptible or mortal. But *Austin* himself refutes that argument of the *Platonists*, by urging the immortality of the body of Christ, which saw no corruption, and over which death can have no power.* *Irenæus* says, Every thing but God had a beginning; but it does not therefore follow, that every thing but God shall have an end. This would defeat the promises of life eternal.† It also deserves to be considered (as we have hinted before,) whether *Adam*, if he had remained perfect, could have begotten corruptible or mortal bodies, *death being* entirely *the wages of sin*, and as contrary to a pure nature as to God, who can form nothing unclean.

In the visible world, we perceive (what some have called) an *enthea*, or divine virtue, in every class of beings, to perpetuate their specific existences, by propagating, without the power of changing, successions of

* *De Genes.* l. ii. See the sentiments of the Platonists, and other philosophers, in *Cicero. Tusc. quæst.* l. i. *De Repub.* l. vi.

† *Adv. Hær.* l. ii. c. 64.

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other existences, absolutely distinct yet essentially similar to their own.

In the animal world, omitting all the inferior classes, we daily see children resembling their progenitors, not only in the features and lineaments of person, but in the turns and distinguishing peculiarities of mind. Whence can this congeniality of spirit, in its sublime and immaterial properties, arise, but in that course and order, which are established in all other things?

Nor are these mental resemblances confined to some individuals, or families, or towns; but they are evident in states and empires, and in the greatest divisions of the world. National characteristics are proverbial. We do not find the peculiar features of *China* in *England*; nor the temper of the soul which informs them, abstracted from passionate and boisterous emotions. A *Briton* receives it more as a compliment to his nation than himself, when he is allowed not to possess the dull phlegm of a *Dutchman*, the dark irascibility of a *Spaniard*, or the *Frenchman's* frothy and impetuous vivacity.

There is no necessity of implying from hence, that men are of different species, or (as *Voltaire* would insinuate) of different creations, in opposition to *Moses*. Physiologists have observed, that any set of men, intermarrying only with their own tribe, will establish a distinction of countenance for themselves, and more especially if they are exposed to the impressions of another climate. It is the voice of unerring inspiration, that *God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.* Acts xvii. 26.

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These distinctions of person cannot be the effect of example alone; for they appear in the earliest infancy, when the mimetic powers are incapable of action, and when mere nature (if the expression may be used) is too natural to be concealed.

The *Athanasian* creed states, that "the SON is of the FATHER alone: not made, nor created, but *begotten*:" and it is generally understood, that these words imply the *generation* of the second Person in the Trinity. But is not this a propagation of spirit from spirit, in that sense, utterly inscrutable to reason? and can they, who admit the verity of that creed in this instance, consistently resist a psychogenesis in a subordinate rank of being?—I tread *with awe upon this holy ground*, and dare to trespass here no farther, not even in my imagination.

One may safely take more liberty with men, and their opinions: and the present abstruse subject may be ventilated, without the least breach of faith, charity, or good manners. As a topic of nature, it may innocently exercise the faculties of the soul respecting its own being; and if grace can draw any instruction from it, which may tend to display the glory of the divine attributes, it may be more than a pleasant speculation for a christian. In this view, I will venture to add some humble thoughts to the preceding considerations.

It is readily allowed by writers on both sides of the question, that the *body* is not *the man*, but, rather, the *soul* dwelling in, or informing the body.* How then

*Thus *Lactantius* elegantly: *Corpusculum hoc, quo induti sumus, hominis receptaculum est. Nam ipse homo neque tangi, neque aspici, neque comprehendi potest; quia latet intra hoc, quod videtur.* De Opif. Dei. §. 19.

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can we be properly called *the children of men*; if that, which is *not man*, is *all* that we derive from our parents?

If body is allowed to be dead immediately upon its disjunction from the soul; then, not in the earliest instance, can it be admitted to have lived till it possessed the soul. If it did not live in the moment of conception, the anatomists will dispute perhaps any later period:* but, if it did, the soul must have been traduced or created, in that individual instant, with it or for it. If traduced with it, then with itself the soul must have lived before in the parent: and this most difficult part of the mystery must take its resolution with the following scriptures; how the first man *Adam*, being *a living soul*,† and *Eve* the *mother of all living*, could possibly be the progenitors of only *dead* matter, which the body must be if not generated with the soul: and how in that case their offspring, both in body and soul, became sinful alike before God, and liable to *death*; and especially as death is not to be considered as *natural*, but *penal*. If it be said, with *Austin*, *Anima creatur infundendo, et infunditur creando*; we may be puzzled to find out a precise meaning to those words; but we shall perhaps be more puzzled to avoid the charge of imputing to God a positive concurrence in

* *Charlton*, Oecon. Anim. p. 280.

† It is granted, that the Hebrew uses great latitude in the word נפש, here rendered *soul*, applying it sometimes to the outward frame; but in Gen. ii. 7. it cannot be understood of that inferior principle of nature alone, but at least of his body and soul together, if not of his soul only; נשמה or רוח are the terms generally used to express his *intellectual* or *spiritual* part, as בשר is to name the *carnal*.

those

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those adulterous connexions, which are attended with issue.

The famous and learned St. *Jerom*, as in all other things which he opposed, was a warm adversary to the doctrine of the soul's traduction. There are several arguments, collected from him by an uncertain author, and annexed to his works under the title of *Dialogus Hieronymi & Augustini*, which relate to this subject; one or two of which (as they have not been discussed before) may be considered.

He cites Exod. xxi. 22. that if a man strike a woman with child, and she miscarry, life should be given for life, if the child were fully formed; but a fine only should be laid, if otherwise: and from thence he argues, that the soul doth not inhabit the body, till the body be completely formed, and consequently that the soul is not traduced.—This is a question of *fact* to be settled by abler physiologists than *Jerom*. But as to the *doctrine*, it is rather mis-stated. *Moses* speaks not of the *mischief* which might ensue to the *fœtus*, but to the *woman*. If she by violence miscarried, yet survived, a fine should be paid by the assaulter to the husband; but if her death ensued, the assaulter, as in other cases of murder, could not be pardoned.*

Si cum semine et anima existit ex anima, multæ animæ quotidie pereunt; cum semen fluxu quodam non profecit nativitati. If this did not also compose a complete *body*, so as to form a child of *Adam* (which he must have

* This comment of *Jerom's* is taken from the LXX; and it is also adopted by *Ramburtius*. Thes. *Sedan. De homine*. vol. ii. p. 264.

allowed,)

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allowed,) then no creature perished. The same answer will serve for the soul.

Sed ex quo detur; ex mare an fœmina? This question can only be answered by another: From *which* is the body?

I must here take my leave, upon this subject, of the learned father: only observing, that it cannot be right to say of those, who are on either side of such a question, as he ventures to do, *Anathema sint.*

We know so little concerning the mode of spiritual existences, that we only hazard opinions, when we offer to determine upon their powers. It is a very antient doctrine, which some learned and modern christians have adopted, that the soul doth not so much live in the body, as the body in the soul. However that be, it is certain, that more spirits than one can reside in and actuate one body: witness, the seven evil spirits in *Mary Magdalene*, and *a legion* of them in another, who must have had their own particular influence upon both those bodies, in communion either with or without their own proper souls. One would not venture from hence to urge the generation of spirits, or (as they are commonly called) angels, nor yet from the rabbinical sense of that scripture, which relates the intercourse of the *sons of God with the daughters of men*, Gen. vi. 4. but if the invisible world be peopled with inhabitants in a manner analogous to that which we see about us, there seems neither impiety nor impossibility in such a notion. The etherial regions are infinite; and as creatures, be they what they may, are but finite; their immortality can never be a surcharge upon their increase; and what is innumerable

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can never exceed what is *unbounded*. There is a PROFOUND, which generation and creation together can neither fill nor fathom.

I have been the more inclined to the opinion I have here ventured to maintain, from the fullest conviction of that philosophical (I had almost said, divine) argument, that mind is the first agent, and that body is but its instrument in all operations. By this gross medium it is confined to this *world*, and *communicates* with the material forms upon it. The objects of sense, and the senses which perceive those objects, do not inform the soul concerning its own nature, for it is above them; nor concerning the nature of God, for he is infinitely more so. To this effect is that luminous observation of F. *Mallebranche*, which M. *Rollin* quotes in his account of the antient philosophers: "The senses were given us by God (says he,) not to enable us to know the *nature* of objects, *but their relation to us;* not what they are *in themselves*, but whether they are *advantageous* or *hurtful* to our *bodies*."

Upon the whole; it can be no shame, after so great a man as *Austin*, for an inferior mind to acknowledge embarrassment upon so difficult a subject. In many cases, we may be content to take up with the *probable*, rather than expect the *certain*. The string of notions which *Tully** gives us, and from him *Macrobius*,† taken from the greatest philosophers, concerning the nature of the soul, may incline us to pity and bewail the darkness of all our thoughts upon the very fountain from which they spring. But, at the same time, our hearts

* *Tusc. Quæst.* l. i. § 19, &c. † *Somn. Scip.* l. i. c. 14.

should

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should overflow with thankfulness, that God, in his mercy, hath not left us ignorant respecting so essential a point as the *condition* of our souls; though he hath not thought fit to reveal the *mode*, by which they come into the world. Blessed be his name, his infallible word amply assures us of the absolute *immateriality* and *immortality* of our spirits; and we may be sure, that no system can be true, which is irreconcileable with the maintenance of these. They originated, from God, in our first parent at least; and to God, as to their rest and perfection, they ultimately tend.

The very limited extent of human knowledge, and the small capacity of the human intellect, ought to humble our pride, and to send us rather to prayer for understanding, than to the indulgence of the least conceit in boasting of it. We know not ourselves. We are ignorant of the mode of our existence. We can, indeed, distinguish a little between matter and spirit, between body and mind; but we cannot explain, nor indeed conceive, the real origin of either, and the reciprocal action of the one upon the other; though the fact be obvious, and the effect indisputable. The radical causes of things are inscrutable by us; and our best wisdom is, in the humble acknowledgement of our own ignorance, to refer the secret wonders, which fill the world and which surpass our comprehension, to the primary wisdom and power of that infinite Being, who is above all, and in all, and through all, his creation.

There are doubtless exalted spirits, who, from their being entirely refined, or unclogged by matter, do superlatively

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latively understand more than is possible by men, who gather ideas chiefly from sensation, and who dwell in houses of clay. To these inhabitants of the spiritual and intellectual world, how weak and confined must the understandings of our fallen race appear; perhaps more dull and gross than the comprehension of a snail, or of an oyster, to one of us! If we cannot trace out the spring and vivid operations, which actuate the matter lying open to our senses; how much less are we able to investigate the sublime and penetrating agencies and influences of those pure spirits, which every where surround us, and especially of that Supreme and Holy Spirit, who is the first cause and last end of his whole creation! We see effects, and these often with much imperfection; but we are soon lost, when we try to examine their origin, or the first principle which produced them. Yet man, vain man, *would fain be wise*, and aims to be thought so; though, with respect to these subjects and the comparative reach of his mind, he is born *like the wild ass's colt*, who looks with a giddy or stupid amazement upon the wilderness about him, feels a base or greedy appetite, but understands nothing.

Blessed be God, however, the things which concern our real welfare, are so constituted, as to be generally obvious to our senses and understandings, or within the reach of their industrious application. Even *the deep things of God*, which relate to our eternal happiness, are laid open, gradually or as we are able to bear them, to our thoughts and apprehensions by his Word and Spirit. And if, at any time, we are puzzled, through our infirmities,

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firmities, respecting the knowledge of his truth, or feel our need of farther light and experience; we have, for our comfort and encouragement, an ample promise with direction, that, if *any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally and will not upbraid.* By humble prayer and use of appointed means, the Christian will find his light increased, his faith strengthened, his hope animated, and, with its principle, the genuine effect of every grace more and more to abound.

And here one cannot but admire the wisdom and goodness of God, in the plain revelation of all things essential to the knowledge of redemption; for that redemption is in itself of so sublime a nature, so connected with all the divine attributes, and so important and everlasting in all its consequences to sinful creatures, that no artifice or ability of man could possibly have drawn out the bare scheme of its transcendent arrangement. Yet the great truths of salvation are laid down in the clearest language, and illustrated by natural or symbolical resemblances, which reach our eyes, our ears, and our hearts, at once. They seem almost too familiar to be misunderstood. But, at the same time, both to humble the pride of man, and to evince the exalted nature of this glorious redemption, it is a truth, justified by every day's experience, that the natural wisdom of the human mind, be it improved with all the outward advantages which education and science can afford, cannot really comprehend this surprising manifestation of the divine benignity, plainly as it is delineated, without a power superior to its own. It is an unerring

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testimony, which shall stand at least as long as this present world, that *the natural man receiveth not the things of the* SPIRIT *of God; neither can he know them,* BECAUSE *they are spiritually discerned.* And it is equally a truth upon fact, that many an unlettered clown, who can scarcely return a *why* or a *wherefore* upon the subject in which men are always ready to boast of their knowledge, shall apprehend this magnificent system of the eternal Majesty, in both its exalted light and power, shall contemplate with admiration the vastness of his bounty, shall meet the storms of a rugged life with invincible faith and patience, and shall finally enter the valley of the shadow of death, declaring that he neither fears nor finds any evil. To this common level, God brings all his redeemed. The wise and learned believers must confess, in this glorious business, that *of themselves they know nothing;* and that they were made sensible, through the grace which enabled them to trust in Christ, how expedient it was for them *to become fools, that they might be wise* indeed. The ignorant and unlearned also find with rapture, that God exalteth them of low degree; and that those invaluable instructions, which he *hideth from the wise and the prudent,* he is pleased to *reveal unto babes,* that *no flesh should glory in his presence.*

With these reflections I dismiss a subject, which, if it convey no other light, but the conviction of human darkness in all things *not* revealed, may serve to send us upon our knees to the throne of grace, that nothing which *is* revealed, or which is necessary to be known, may be hidden from us; but that, if we are wise in nothing beside

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beside, we may at least be sufficiently *wise unto salvation.* And, in that eternal rest which remains to be enjoyed, where *we shall know even as we also are known,* our doubts and difficulties concerning this, and a thousand other intricate subjects, shall vanish in a moment, and we shall see, beyond all present conceptions of our souls, how we exist and have existed, how we have been led by the unseen hand of God through all the labyrinths of time, and (what is better than all) how we are and shall be united in an indissoluble union to *Jesus Christ*, and, through him, to the DIVINE NATURE, for evermore.

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ON CHRISTIAN MANNERS.

Quid deceat; quid non.

HOR.

IT will very easily be owned by any man conversant with the religious world, that the effect of divine truth in the life rarely keeps pace with the speculation of it in the head; and that the experience of the gospel falls evidently short of the profession made of it. Nothing entertains the invidious enmity of the world more than the proofs, too often given, of this melancholy circumstance. People, void of religion, fancy they can draw a fair plea for their sins from the slips and failings (to call them by no harsher name) of those who set up for devout professors; and they will readily circulate the tale, and possibly with some additions of their own, throughout the compass of their acquaintance. They have no eyes to see, or they will purposely turn from, all the evidences of grace in the person accused; but are ready enough to give full scope to the developement of his foibles and frailties. It is a pity it should be so; but a greater pity still, that there should really be so much occasion for it.

The apostle gives a weighty caution upon this subject, which ought to be written, if not upon the walls of every church or place of worship, according to a good old custom, at least upon every believer's heart—WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY, NOT AS FOOLS, BUT AS WISE, RE-

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REDEEMING THE TIME, BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL.

The Christian, for this end, should be a very severe *censor morum* respecting himself, and a very candid observer of all the world beside.

In domestic relations, particularly where some of the family are not made happy with the love of divine things; it becomes the serious professor to watch over himself with abundant caution; and to pray earnestly, that his whole conversation and conduct may be so ordered, as to give no just cause of offence to those, who will not only lie in wait for his failings, but who will also have the most frequent opportunities to observe them. Unless divine grace prevent, one of his infirmities will give more occasion of reproach to the truth he professes, than a hundred of his most serious discourses or expostulations can furnish proofs to its praise.

A vast deal of gracious prudence is especially necessary in a believer's conduct, whether male or female, in the conjugal state, in order to avoid all unnecessary prejudices, and to render truth no more exceptionable than it always will be to an unregenerate mind. There is a certain delicacy of grace (if I may use the expression) or tender method of representing and practising religious duties, which leaves the opposite party without excuse for brutality or roughness, if there be (as is often the case) even a natural inclination to show them. On the other hand, there is an offensive, and sometimes an ostentatious display of religious profession, which only tends to harden and incense; whereas the object should be, to melt down by that *meekness of wisdom*, which

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ought ever to be employed by those who have hope as the children of God. Such a conduct seems a sort of pious impiety, and puts religion itself into so ill a dress, that people, who do not thoroughly know her, are often ashamed to acknowledge her in the face of the world. It looks like a satire upon the gospel itself, to rank the spleen and sourness of mere human nature among the beauties of holiness.

Morosus is a good man, and has many of the real evidences which distinguish the sincere Christian. He is conscientious in all the leading duties of a religious life, walks in the fear of God, and is carried very much above the spirit of the world. Yet, with all the reality of grace, there is but little appearance of its happiness, either in himself or his family. He wears a gloomy face, as though he thought it sinful to entertain a chearful one. That lively seriousness, which well becomes the inward tranquility of the divine life, is considered by him as a species of criminality; and he thinks, that to be strictly grave, a man must be always sad.

It is easy to conceive what effect this opinion must have both in his temper and his family. His children, who are growing up to maturity, look at the gospel as a scarecrow, which is to frighten them away from all the comforts of life; and, under this impression, they consider the strictness of their father's conduct as a fetter, and his house as a prison. The same dismal apprehensions run through all the servants. The respect, which their master really deserves, is turned into fear; and they approach him with a degree of horror, rather than with that pleasurable reverence which should be seen in the domestics

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domestics of a Christian family. The ungodly part of them are rivetted in their natural prejudices; and the rest, if they are serious, are quite put out of countenance, and can say nothing in behalf of religious happiness, without indirectly condemning their master.

How different is the conduct of *Evander!* To high rank, and many distinctions of outward advantages, God hath added (what is very unusual) all the humility of the lowest Christian, with a great share of the deep knowledge and experience of a divine. The mild benevolence of his aspect, and the winning attraction of his manners, engage your heart in his favour before he utters a word. His looks bespeak him happy, and a wish to make you so. When he converses, it is with such a glowing affability, that the charm increases; and the good-nature and good sense of his discourse, enlivened and enriched by the truth and power of grace, might work an infidel into a temporary reverence for the gospel, but will certainly impress a believer with a fresh instance of its loveliness. The most profligate worldling sees something in *Evander*, which he cannot but wish to be in himself. His unaffected complacency carries with it a conviction to the most dissolute debauchees, that there is a heart-felt delight in real religion, which is not to be found in any of their pleasures.

If you look into his family, the master's serenity goes through the whole of its economy and behaviour. His children love to hear him speak of divine things, because with their own force he shows by his representation of them, that they are *good* things, and tend to heighten all natural as well as spiritual bliss. They are not frowned

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into seriousness, but engaged into devotion; and though no earthly parent can give grace to his offspring, he at least can show them the felicity of it, and may prove it, or at least ought to do so, by its effects upon himself. *Evander* is of this mind, and cannot believe that a long face, and a set of features stiffened into a fierce kind of dulness, are any fit representations of the excellencies of grace, or any recommendations to the person who wears them. If this were religion, the most hard-favoured visage might be deemed a blessing; but it is not a monstrous appearance that will frighten off the devil, whatever it may do with mankind.

In a word, *Evander* not only enjoys, but recommends, THE TRUTH to his family and the world; while *Morosus* approaches her indeed, but seems so little favoured by her sweetness, as to make the ignorant believe she has none to bestow. *Evander*, like the spies sent to visit *Canaan*, produces the rich clusters of grapes; that is, shows the felicity of God's chosen in the possession of his love; but *Morosus* can only talk of difficulties and sorrows, and so (though unintentionally) brings up an evil report upon the good land.

Gospel-truth should be accompanied with gospel-manners. If these are at variance in any man, his profession is wrong. Seriousness is no enemy to civility; nor is devotion a stranger to kindness of heart and life. The apostle's exhortation is admirable upon this subject, and should be treasured up in every Christian's mind, for his rule of conduct upon all occasions: *Put on* (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) *bowels of mercies, kindness, χρηστοτητα, a sweet benignity of soul towards others, humbleness*

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humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel against any, even as CHRIST *forgave you, so also do ye.*

But, while I observe, that the grace of God is by no means averse to refinement and even elegance of conversation and conduct; I would beg leave to add, that, in order to avoid the suspicion of brutality, it is not in the least necessary to take up a dissimulating politeness. Simplicity of behaviour, like simplicity of dress, admits of such engaging beauties, as set off a person to the utmost advantage, while they become the most proper ornaments of his exterior profession. Doubling and disguise are utterly irreconcileable to the gospel, and ill befit him, who has any sense that he is walking before the great SEARCHER of hearts, or who has no injurious designs upon others.

I often admire the decent firmness of the celebrated seven bishops, whom King JAMES the Second, in the illiberal and persecuting spirit of a *Romish* bigot, committed to the Tower, for refusing their sanction to one of his insidious declarations. They submitted to his Majesty, that their refusal to comply with his commands did not proceed from any spirit of opposition, but from a conviction that it was impossible to obey him in that instance, without violating not only their prudence, honour, and conscience, but the established laws of the land; and therefore they earnestly and respectfully besought him to grant them his excuse. When this unhappy prince retorted upon them with considerable acrimony, and with his reproaches was pleased

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pleased to throw out some threats; one of his bishops replied, in a submissive tone of voice, GOD'*s will be done!* The king, not distinctly hearing him, called out with some quickness to know what he had spoken. SIR, says the bishop (looking upon the king, with the most determined, and, at the same time, with the most respectful courage,) *I said,* GOD'*s will be done!* and immediately retired.

I have reason to fear, that many of the *insults,* which some *truly serious* people meet *with,* are not brought upon them merely for their adherence to the truth of God, but too often from the carnal tempers and improper conduct which they indulge in themselves. Such persons need *to be very* frequently upon their knees in secret, not only that they may escape evils upon this account to themselves, but that they give no solid occasion of offence to others. And I am sure, that few reflections can give a real Christian more pain, than the thought that the gospel of his Saviour should receive any disgrace by his misconduct, or that by his means the adversaries of true godliness should find the shadow of a pretence to blaspheme.

ANTIQUITY

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ANTIQUITY AND COMFORT OF TRUTH.

Id verius, quod prius: id prius, quod ab initio.

TERT.

THE eastern nations have many truths current among them, which, however intermixed and debased by the common corruptions of time and other peculiarities of situation, bear evident characters of a divine original, and prove, from the very nature of the truths themselves, their transmission from antient revelation. The doctrine of the fall and of the Trinity, however mutilated and depraved; the notion and practice of sacrifices, with many other religious tenets and circumstances; have been traced almost throughout the world: and none but savages of the very lowest form are without some principles which bear a resemblance to those revealed in the Bible, notwithstanding a thousand miserable distortions and extravagances. It is likewise very remarkable, that, though the corruptions may and do differ exceedingly, according to the genius and climate of the several nations, the great and leading principles they have corrupted are the same among them all. If the expression may be used, it is a likeness of body with a variety of dress, according to the whim and superstition of minds, departed from God, and without the true knowledge either of him or themselves.

I confess

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I confess myself much pleased with one of their tenets which is founded upon the doctrine of the soul's IMMORTALITY, and which therefore I take to have been derived, however remote in time, from God's own revelation to his people: "The state of man in this world (say they) resembles only that of a fœtus in the womb after its conception: it is dark, confined, void of reflection, and capable only of that sensation which, in the same circumstances, is common to the merest brutes. On the other hand, what we call death, is actually the birth to a real and immortal life; where the faculties of the soul can expand themselves, can find innumerable objects for their exercise, and can range from world to world without limit or end." *It is in this view that* "the day of death (to use the words of the wise man) is better than the day of one's birth." On the latter, we are "born to sorrow;" but on the other, if we have been born also in a better sense, we only pass to an eternal "newness of life."

Let me be understood in this matter. I would not affirm, that death in itself, simply, is better than our present life; but death in certain conditions and consequences. Many have desired to die; because they have been either afraid to live, or were weary of life. Like the indolent Indian, perhaps, they can take up their word, and say, "It is better to walk than to run; it is better to lie down than to walk; it is better to sleep than to wake; it is better to die than to live:" and they may say it, because, like him, they are only tired with breathing, or find the vexations of life pressing hardly upon them. Not a spark of grace may be in all this; but only

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only the laziness, the disappointment, or the petulance, of a corrupt and jaded nature.

But there are cases, blessed be God, in which men may say, Death is better than life; because, in those cases, *to die is gain.* The apostle could *desire to depart:* but it was not merely for the sake of departing, but because he should *be with Christ,* which, he tells us, was the very best thing for him, as it certainly is for any one. We are to wait, however, in faith and patience for God's time; and if it argue greater courage to dare to live, as in some instances it is possible, than to rush upon death; then it becomes the courage of a Christian to meet life with all its sorrows, and to call upon the Captain of his salvation for victory over them. I never could read Dr. *Donne's* learned and ingenious treatise in justification of suicide, without even greater horror and contempt than the verses of *Lucretius* upon the same subject: the one was a christian, and (notwithstanding this strange and melancholy opinion) a good man, who ought to have seen that suffering patience is the true conquest; whereas the other was an Epicurean heathen, without the knowledge of God, or his enlightening revelation. It was happy for the one, that divine grace preserved him from following the miserable example of the other.

There are but few, however, of this desperate strain. The greater part of mankind are fond of life, and *would fain see good days;* and therefore God hath graciously explained the blessedness of death to his people, because it leads them to the best days. He doth not, as the poet *Lucan* imagined of his gods, conceal the happiness of dying, lest men should not endure to live; but he reveals

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reveals it fully in its glorious consequences, that they may be prepared to live for ever. And there is not a stronger suspicion, that a man is not well acquainted with the nature of eternal life, when he knows not how to live in this world, or when he rashly ventures to hurry himself out of it. When God says, "Come up hither;" in the same moment he enables the soul to quit the house of clay, and to stand among the spirits of the just before his throne.

The Lord hath revealed, and often gives very manifest impressions of, eternal life to his redeemed, in order to abate, if not intirely remove, the fear of death: and (as an ingenious author hath observed) "for a Christian to be amazed at death, I cannot see how he can escape this dilemma,—either that he is too sensible of this life, or hopeless of the life to come."

Usually, the Spirit of grace affords a particular support to the faithful in this most trying revolution of nature. In some cases, the effects and demonstrations of his presence have been wonderful. A Christian cannot read over *Melchior Adam's* Lives and Deaths of Eminent Believers, without an equal measure of delight and veneration, or without wishing to live and die like them. I have my eye at present upon his Memoir of the learned and ingenious Italian lady OLYMPIA FULVIA MORATA, who was one of the earliest and brightest ornaments of the Reformation. She was brought up in the court of Ferrara, under a very eminent and learned father, who was preceptor to the young princes of that house; and she formed a particular intimacy with the princess their sister, being

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being both of the same age, and both educated together. Her literary abilities astonished every body; for she could declaim in Latin, converse in Greek, and was a critic in the most difficult classics. But divine grace afforded her far more valuable accomplishments than these. Upon the death of her father, the affairs of his family necessarily called her from court; and about this time a learned physician of Germany, a pious man and a protestant, made his addresses, and married her. With him she retired from Italy, and, upon seriously and diligently reading the scriptures, to which she had formerly been a very great stranger, it pleased God not only to convert her from Popery to Protestantism, but (which is a more difficult work) *to translate her from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his own dear Son.* From henceforth all her joy was in that superior learning, which, beyond the minute objects of time and sense, consists in the knowledge and enjoyment of divine and eternal concerns. To this effect she wrote to the princess, her fellow-pupil and friend.—"When, by the particular goodness of God, I was delivered from the idolatry of my own country, and had retired with my husband into Germany; the change made by his grace upon my heart, could I express it, might seem almost as incredible to you, as it is astonishing to me. The dislike which I once had to the scriptures, from which I had kept, and been taught to keep, at the greatest distance, was turned into the greatest delight and pleasure I had in the world: and now my soul is principally engaged in this most blessed study. Here, I may say, is my sweetest

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sweetest and happiest comfort. My thoughts, my industry, my concern, are fixed upon this object: so that the world, which once I too fondly admired, and all its joys and pursuits, which then employed and took up my time, are become not only indifferent, but even contemptible to me." The end of such a life was answerable to its beginning. After much trouble and danger from the wars then carried on in the empire, she at last settled with her husband at Heidelberg. Here it pleased God to call her from the world. Her joys, upon the view of this change, were as extraordinary as the troubles of her life which preceded it. She was almost distressed, when her friends indulged any presages of her recovery: and told them, that "the Lord had been pleased to give her a short course, but full of agitations and troubles: and that she could not desire to return again to them, now she seemed so near the port." Upon being asked, whether she had any doubts upon her mind respecting her spiritual state? she answered; "For these last seven years, during which I have known God and embraced his truth, I have seldom been free from some assault or other of Satan against my faith and hope: but now, as though his darts were expended, he troubles me no more in this respect; nor have I any other impressions at present on my soul, but an inexpressible tranquillity and peace with God through Jesus Christ." She expressed herself without a doubt upon her state as a child of God. A little before her departure, waking out of a slumber, she looked with a smile of unusual cheerfulness and affection upon her husband; and, upon his asking her the cause, she replied; "O I have now had a view of my

rest,

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rest in a most delightful and excellent place, shining with glory and brightness altogether unutterable." Upon her husband's telling her, that indeed she had reason to look so happy, since in a very little space her spirit would fully enjoy all she had been seeing; she had only strength to answer, with a smile of the utmost complacency and delight, "I am nothing but joy; but now I know you no more." It was all she could speak, before she was "graciously dissolved to be with Christ."

Her excellent husband, Dr. Grunthler, says, that this was only a specimen of the joy and peace she expressed during her last illness: her mouth was full of the praises of God, for calling her out of darkness into his marvellous light, and for bringing the knowledge of his salvation into her soul.

Some of your readers may wish to know, that this *fœmina doctissima ac plane divina* (as the editor of her works styles her) "this very learned and truly divine woman" departed at Heidelberg in October 1555, and only in the twenty-ninth year of her age.

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UPON HARDENED IGNORANCE of RELIGION.

Errare possum; hæreticus esse nolo.

Aug.

Among all the circumstances which at present attend this country, scarcely any one seems more alarming to a serious mind, which reflects upon the proximate causes of God's judgements in times of old, than the immense ignorance of divine things, and the consequent dissoluteness, which appear in all quarters of the land. In the country parishes, especially, the coarseness of manners is not to be mentioned with the inundation of wickedness, idleness and debauchery, which sweeps, like a plague almost all before it, and particularly in those neighbourhoods where the summer-residence of some profligate great or wealthy man forms a lodgement for all sorts of vices, brought thither by themselves or by abandoned servants. The havock in every thing decent which these unhappy people make, during their temporary excursions from the taverns, bagnios, and other debauched seminaries of the town, is truly lamentable to every man, who prefers honour, virtue, and religion, to titles, gold, and sin.

If you ask nine-tenths of our country people what they understand by the Christian religion, and how they hope

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hope to be saved; the best answer most of them can give, is, that "it is not for poor folks to trouble their heads about such matters; that they believe, if they do not wrong any-body, nor curse or swear, but take care of *the main chance* (as they call it,) and bring up their families to get their own livings, they shall do very well at last." A man, who never heard of the name of Christ, will say as much, or more than this: and if you wish to inform them better, they will look upon you, ignorant as they are, for some melancholy fool, that would fill their heads with whimsies, and keep them from their lawful employments. Those, who have not conversed with some of these upon the subject of religion, will not easily conceive what a hardened selfishness locks up their understandings; and with what stubborn prejudice, as well as stupidity, they meet the very sound of the gospel of salvation. When grace bursts asunder these *bars of iron* (as the scripture calls them,) it appears to be invincible grace indeed: and, occasionally, it has burst them, in order to prove, that no bonds are too strong for the greatness of its power.

If there were not something very awful in the gross misapprehensions of ignorance, one might smile at the reflection, which a countryman once made upon the course of sermons the parish minister had been delivering on the numberless impenitencies of the Jews, and on the heavy judgements which God at length brought upon them, when they had summed up their iniquities in crucifying the Son of God. "Pray (says the old farmer to some of his brethren,) have there been any Jews this way lately with their boxes and gear? I am

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afraid our parson has been a little taken in; he seems, for some Sundays past, so desperately set against the Jews."—This is but a slight sample of absurdity, compared with some I could mention.

Happy would it be, if the ignorance of divine truth were confined to this order of men. Allowing for the advantages of education, I have met with even some clergymen, who understood but little more of it. And almost every-body knows, that it is a prevailing maxim now, that virtue and good works are to be preached up as the great requisites of salvation; insomuch that a minister, who ventures to treat upon Jesus Christ, as the only beginning, means, and end of a sinner's redemption, runs the risque of getting a hard name, or at least of being thought a man quite out of fashion. With this degeneracy of doctrine, we have (what always attends it) a corruption of practice. The very decencies, which in the last age were thought essential to the sacred character, are wearing off apace; and we not only see our news-papers crowded with clerical advertisements for simony and idleness, but likewise for theatrical and other low compositions, which are beneath the sense and gravity of a common philosopher. I am not at all surprised, at this rate, to hear of clergymen engaged in duels: I only wonder, that mixing, as many of them do, with the most profligate and licentious of mankind, and interfering in every irreligious dispute of the times, that they are not more frequently employed in those affairs of a nature extremely foreign to the pulpit, when they seem to have so little sense of its use, or of their own importance in it. The simplicity of

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of a clerk in a country parish takes away from his intentions every suspicion of satire, when he bluntly informed the congregation: "This is to give notice, that there will be no service here next Sunday, Measter being going to L—— races." If my readers blush at the very mention of such a circumstance in a work of this kind; what should such a man have felt for his character, of whom it could be uttered? And if it be a shame for a man, whose heart and soul ought to be engaged in the great matters of eternal life and salvation, to be published as going to a place, "where (as an old Scots divine used to say) the devil, if any where, hath his visible communions upon earth;" what an aggravation of the shame must it be for him to be seen there, and not only seen, but employed in betting, and raging, and coursing through all the disorders of the scene!—I am not speaking at random: their gay and jolly companions have triumphed in the fact, and have shown what a value they set upon a clergyman's example, in preference to all the dry dictates of his tongue.

The men likewise of the greatest attainments and politeness, now-a-days, seem to fear, as a scandal, the very suspicion of knowing, trusting, and rejoicing in God. For a gentleman to be spoken of as "saying his prayers," and especially as calling his family to divine worship, is commonly received with a sneer, either implying his want of common sense, or some hypochondriac affections which deserve to be bantered. And if he venture to mention his hope in Christ, as the ground of his salvation; he runs the risque of being avoided as a pitiful poor creature, who is deluded himself, and

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who perhaps wishes to delude others. I know a person, whom I shall call *Aulicus*, that has received a classical education in one of our most celebrated seminaries, had parents that moved in what the world calls a genteel sphere of life, and conversed habitually with the first ranks of mankind; but, at the same time, was so entirely ignorant of the religion of his country, that he knew nothing of its principles, nor had read with any attention a single chapter in the Bible which contained them; as he frankly confessed, and with some surprise at the novelty of the matter, when he happened to be engaged in a conversation upon the subject. If he had any ideas of religion at all, they were wholly deistical, which he had picked up in the loose discourse and frivolous observations of the fashionable world. And how many are there in this gentleman's condition, who know ten thousand things which cannot profit them in the day of wrath, but are dreadfully ignorant of that ONE THING NEEDFUL, without which they must be undone for ever!

This usually proceeds from what the Scripture calls *blindness of heart*, from the corrupt perversion of which the blindness of the mind take its rise. The affections influence the understanding, and use it as a slave to find out rational pretences, with which, as with ornaments, they seek to cover or to dress their own shame, or as weapons to defend themselves against the convictions of truth. A nobleman of professed infidelity once attempted to argue with that excellent minister, the late Mr. *Walker*, of *Truro*, in opposition to the Christian Religion. "I shall not contend with you, my lord,"

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lord," answered the good man, upon this subject: "your own understanding will, I am sure, justify me when I say, that your heart is much more at fault than your head; and till that is convinced and changed, the whole debate would be nothing better than the strife of words."

But whatever such persons may think of religion, and the state of their souls, amidst the jollity of those, who do not so much as consider whether they have souls, or not; it has been a matter of the deepest reflection and concern with the wisest of men, in the last solemn scene of their lives. As examples will set this subject in a stronger light, than a multitude of the best reflections; I will select two of the greatest men of their time, who, in their dying hours, confirmed the happiness and wisdom of true religion; and shall leave their testimonies for the reader's reflection.

Salmasius was one of the profoundest scholars the world ever saw, and, as he was leaving it, made this confession: "O I have lost a world of time! Time, that "most precious thing in the world; of which had I but "one year longer, it should be spent in reading David's "Psalms, and Paul's Epistles. O Sirs, (addressing him-"self to those who surrounded his bed,) mind the world "less, and God more. All the learning in the world, "without piety and the true fear of the Lord, is nothing "worth. The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and "to depart from evil, that is understanding."

The other instance I would mention, is *Selden*, of whose immense erudition it is quite superfluous to say a word. Upon his death-bed, he sent for archbishop *Usher* and Dr. *Langbaine*, two of his intimate friends,

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and conversed with them to this effect: "That he had "surveyed most part of the learning that was among "the sons of men; that he had his study full of books "and papers upon most subjects in the world; yet at "that time he could not recollect any passage, out of "the multitude of books and manuscripts that he was "master of, wherein he could rest his soul, except in "the HOLY SCRIPTURES: and one passage of this "blessed book lay with most weight upon his spirit, "taken from the apostle *Paul's* epistle to *Titus:* The "grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared "to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness "and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, "and godly, in this present world; looking for that "blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great "God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave him-"self for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, "and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of "good works."

A COMMON

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A COMMON HISTORY.

Re fruere, ut natus mortalis: dilige sed rem,
Tanquam immortalis.———

AUSON.

THERE was a man, who became rich; and the method he took to become so, was this.

He exercised himself in his calling almost night and day; and he followed this course for many years. And he said within himself, "I will be rich, and I will do thus and thus to get riches." And accordingly he rose early in the morning; and he invited several poor persons, saying; "Work for me, and I will give you that which will buy meat, drink, and cloathing." And the poor people hearkened to him; and they worked hard on that day, and the day following, and on the day after that, and so on for many days together. And he screwed out of their labor, and the profits of their labor, money upon money, increasing it in time to a heap. And when he had thus gotten one heap, he took the same means to make up another, and another after that, till he had raised many heaps; the poor people wondering all the while when they saw, how fast they made his heaps to grow up, and having no power or skill, though inclination enough, to make one for themselves.

When he had thus amused himself and them for about thirty

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thirty years, he began to say within himself, "Now will I enjoy the heaps I have raised; and these poor people shall admire how much I will enjoy them." And he committed the method of making heaps into other hands; but first agreed with them, that the heaps they should raise by his method should be shared between him and them. And they joyfully consented thereto. And upon this he retired into woods and lawns, saying, "Now will I live a rural life." And he got men together to build him an house; and he pleased himself extremely to see how the men toiled and sweat to build a house for him. And they wrought hard while he looked upon them, and they played when he did not; and they laughed at him as a fool for building such a house, and for building it when he was old. And he disliked the ground about the house he was building; and he would have it altered; and he ordered one lump of dirt to be laid in one place, that it might be higher, and another taken away from another place, that it might be lower; and that he might see a tree that stood afar off, and that a place he did not like to see might be hidden. And he said, it was all very fine. And he furnished this house with many things; and he called upon all his neighbours to admire them. And they visited him, and admired them all to his face, and reviled both him and them behind his back, as being all without taste or propriety. And they bowed, and smiled, and said compliments, which is supposed to be an ingenious art of speaking any thing and meaning nothing, and he did the same to them; and this, they declared, was being very happy. And when they departed; they did not spare

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spare his method of making heaps, nor his personal defects, nor his vanity, nor his situation, nor his pleasures, nor any thing else that he had. And this envy and spleen they called jocularity and taste. And he also got together a great number of people *called* servants; and he cloathed them, and fed them, and made them live with him in his house and in his gardens, and distributed some of his heaps among them for so living. And he looked after them diligently, and they after him—as they could. And he fancied, that he enjoyed the cloaths he gave them more than they did, and also their victuals, and their drink, and their time; and that he had laboured hard for many years for this very good purpose; and that it was a great satisfaction to see how well they looked, and how readily they lived with him to occupy his thoughts and his cares for his money. And all the people wondered and stared to see so many servants about him, and so many horses and dogs, and other animals; and this he called great felicity; and he did all he could to make them wonder and stare again. And they did so again and again, till he and they were tired of this wondering and staring; and then he began to feel, that he was hungry. And "now (said he) will I enjoy my belly." And he eat, and he drank, so much and of so many things, that he could eat and drink no more. And he repeated this from day to day, and for several years; and his servants, and his horses, and his dogs, and all the animals about his house, did so likewise; and at length by these means he grew sick and diseased; and physicians were sent for, who obliged him to swallow down all manner of nauseous things, which they told him *might* happen to cure him, but

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but they did not; and so at length he died, having done all he could to destroy nature, as well as hired others to assist him in doing it. And then he had a sumptuous funeral, with plumes, and horses, and so forth. And his corpse was dressed in the highest style of death, and was wrapped in lead, and carried along from one place to another with great pomp; and all the people admired, how wisely he had contrived to enjoy so many fine things, and to get such a fine funeral, and to be laid at last in a church, and in a fine tomb. And they all resolved to do, if they could, as he had done; and one thought within himself, "Now, is not all this worth being damned for?" And he said no, with his mouth, but in his heart and life the very contrary; for he went and did likewise, as much as he could driving out all unseasonable thoughts of God (as he considered them) till he could think no longer, and at length departed as the other had done before him. And there are thousands that see all this, and approve it, and say, "That this is the best way of spending a man's time, and this the chief and great end of his coming into the world."

Reader; *art thou* THE MAN, OR ONE of the men, above described? And, in that case is not this history, ironical as it may seem, most seriously thine? Is not the anxious bustle of thy life for objects, and *only* for objects, like these, at once deplorably ridiculous and dreadful? Can word describe, or thought conceive, how ridiculous, and yet how dreadful? And hast thou the shadow of a right, then, under a conduct so certainly tending to ruin, to treat with contempt, or to cast ridicule upon those, who wish to be wise for eternity and cannot be content to murder their time?

TRUE

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TRUE PIETY IS POLITICAL WISDOM.

——isthuc est sapere, non quod ante pedes modo est
Videre; sed etiam illa, quæ futura sunt
Prospicere.

TER.

IT is a very common, but a very unjust and profligate opinion which obtains in the world, that the fear of God, and the knowledge and practice of religion entirely unfit a man for the discussion of public affairs, or the proper service of his country. Unhappily, those persons, who pass this judgement, are very much disqualified for the office; because they do not appear to understand the merits of the case. For, as none but irreligious people could adopt a sentiment of this kind; so, being irreligious, it is not uncharitable to say, that they are incapable of deciding upon a principle, which (over and above the force of the natural understanding) is the wisdom of God in the mind, and holiness from God in the heart and life. The faculties of such men are too overwhelmed with the sensualities and disorders of the world to see the beauty and propriety of a subject, which is only to be understood by a nobler energy and elevation of soul, than can be raised from the unassisted powers of fallen man.

But

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But this notion is false in *fact*. Some of the greatest and wisest statesmen, who, under God, have blessed the world, were eminently distinguished for their love and knowledge of divine truth, and for the circumspection and purity of their lives. And indeed, how can a man be properly wise, who neither knows, nor admires, nor follows, the highest wisdom in the world? —a wisdom, which not only furnishes the soul with vast and comprehensive ideas, but (what is no less important) enables it to pursue, through all the shadows of time, its own proper and eternal felicity. It is not too harsh to say, that a man is, to the greatest of all purposes, a fool, who is only sagacious for the trifles of a moment, while he is stupid in every thing beyond it. How can he be truly a man of sense, who neglects the most solid happiness in this world, and his everlasting safety in another? That person is wise to very little purpose, who is not wise to his own salvation.

The opinion I am bold to condemn, is full of mischief to society, and tends to defeat every purpose of human polity. The vice of thought usually produces impiety of practice; and from hence we may trace the domineering wickedness of the present day. This wickedness, either by the secret ordination or the open judgement of Providence, always entails upon a people wretchedness and ruin; as the histories of nations, from their earliest date, do most awfully prove. In public communities, as well as in private life, there is no such thing as real prosperity and happiness, without honour and justice, godliness and truth.

The Bible furnishes example after example to demonstrate

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monstrate this fact: And what are all the annals of the world, but so many attestations of it? The very miseries recorded of past mankind have always been described as originating in wickedness; and the chief detail of human affairs is composed of the recital of human sins. Wherever a decent or sober period comes in, the historian is perplexed for materials, and passes over it as a circumstance so foreign in the world, as scarcely to be described or known. I believe it will be confirmed by the experience of all mankind, that no bad man was ever honoured by Providence to be a real and lasting blessing, properly so called, to any country or people; but that, whenever such an one has been employed, it has been either for the pur pose of a *particular* scourge, as in the case of *Jehu* to the family of *Ahab*, or in the designation of a more *general* judgement, as in the instances of *Alexander*, *Cæsar*, and other butchers of the nations.

Those statesmen, who have feared God as well as honoured the king, have never been called forth by Providence to the principal direction of affairs, but in order that some kind of blessing might ensue. Such men, under God, have been the props of their respective states, and, though less pompous and noisy than conquerors revelling in blood, deserve more properly to be styled, The glories of their country, and the fathers of mankind.

I have been much pleased, in turning over WHITELOCKE's *journal of his embassy to Sweden*, with a pious sentiment, which is related from the famous chancellor OXENSTIERN of that country. This celebrated statesman

man was one of the most able and learned men of his time, and conducted affairs with great success for his government. He was wise enough to be pious, as the reader will perceive by the following transcript, given us by one of his own profession. "I have been so much wearied out in public and great actions, that my retirement and quiet have proved the greater contentment to me: and I find, after all my troubles and toilings in the world, that my private life in the country has afforded me more contentment, than ever I met with in all my public employments. Business was a burden, and much company irksome, yet I have been able to spend some of my time in study; and chiefly, I may say solely, I have applied myself of late to the study of the BIBLE, wherein all wisdom, and the greatest delights are to be found, and much more in the practice of that wisdom. I therefore counsel you (addressing himself to the English ambassador) to make the study and practice of the word of God your chief contentment and delight: as indeed it will be to every soul that favors the truths of God, which infinitely excel all worldly things." To this noble confession of a wise and venerable statesman, it will be apposite enough to add the dying testimony of another great politician, Sir *John Mason*, who had been privy counsellor to two of our kings. "I have been acquainted (says he) with the most remarkable transactions in foreign parts, and been present at very many state-negotiations for thirty years past; and I have learned this conclusion by the course of so many years' experience, That seriousness is the greatest wisdom, temperance the best physic, and a good conscience the best

best estate; and were I to live over my time again, I would change the court for a cloister (or retirement,) and the whole life I have passed in the king's palace, for one hour's happy enjoyment of God in the chapel: All things else forsake me, but my God, my duty, and my prayer."

If this be wisdom in the end of life, it can never be folly in the course of it: and if piety be right conduct, and divinely blessed, in an individual; how happy would a nation be under the general influence of a principle, which could enable them to say, *We have the* LORD *for our* GOD!

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TRIUMPH OVER DEATH.

Undamp'd by doubt, undarken'd by despair,
Philander, thus, augustly rears his head,
At that black hour, which gen'ral horror sheds
On the low level of the faithless throng:
Sweet peace, and heav'nly hope, and humble joy,
Divinely beam on his exalted soul.

YOUNG.

IT was very much the study and employment of some antient philosophers, to reason themselves into a contempt of death; and it was considered as a point of the noblest heroism, sometimes with no reasoning at all, to rush without fear into eternity. *Cicero*, in the first book of his *Tusculan Questions*, treats upon this subject with his usual eloquence, and gives us many examples amongst the heathens of persons, who have encountered the king of terrors without dread; some from the principles of philosophy, and others from mere resolution and vain glory. For my own part, I confess, that I never read this book without emotions of concern. While I pity the weakness of philosophy in some, by the daring brutality of others I am grieved. The very brightest example of death among the Gentiles, which *Cicero* gives us from *Plato*, has something in it of so gloomy

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gloomy an uncertainty, as renders the steadiness, with which it was carried through, rather less rational than resolute. But *Socrates* had only his natural wisdom and powers to trust in, unblest and unsupported by the evidences of divine grace and revelation. He makes a great figure, it is true, for a Gentile; but yet a very pitiable one indeed, if compared with an example of Christian departure, which I will beg leave to offer in this essay.

Montaigne, the modern Epicurean, and the classical *Addison*, profess to be charmed with the death of *Socrates*. The witty rhapsodies of the former upon this subject, shall be omitted, as well as his loose translation of the story: and though, with great veneration for *Socrates*, I must hesitate to believe, that he was (as Mr. *Addison* stiles him) "the greatest mere man that ever breathed," (and much less to call upon him, with an old and eminent writer, *O sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis!*) I will present the reader however with his elegant version from *Cicero* of the noble appeal made by that illustrious philosopher to his judges, when they had condemned him to die.

"I have great hopes, O my judges, that it is greatly to my advantage, that I am sent to death: for it must of necessity be, that one of these two things must be the consequence: death must take away all these senses, or convey me to another life. If all sense is taken away, and death is no more than that profound sleep without dreams, in which we are sometimes buried; O heavens! how desirable is it to die? How many days do we know

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in life preferable to such a state? But if it be true, that death is but a passage to places, which they who lived before us do now inhabit; how much still happier is it to go from those, who call themselves judges, to appear before those that are really such, and to meet men who have lived with justice and truth? Is this, do you think, no happy journey? Do you think it nothing to speak with *Orpheus*, *Musæus*, *Homer*, and *Hesiod*? I would, indeed, suffer many deaths, to enjoy these things.—But let not those among you, who have pronounced me an innocent man, be afraid of death. No harm can arrive at a good man whether dead or living; his affairs are all under the direction of the gods; nor will I believe the fate, which is allotted to me myself this day, to have arrived by chance; nor have I ought to say either against my judges or accusers, but that they thought they did me an injury.—But I detain you too long: it is time that I retire to death, and you to your affairs of life. Which of us has the better is known to the gods, but to no mortal man."

Here is doubtless great magnanimity; but what is its foundation, and where is its hope? The only *foundation* alledged is a self-approbation of innocence and goodness —a plea which we will candidly allow that *Socrates* had a right to make in his unenlightened situation, and upon a comparison of himself with all the world about him; but that it was an erroneous plea for eternal happiness, every man must own, who knows and believes in the gospel of salvation. If *Socrates* be saved, certainly he was saved upon a very different ground from that, which he

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he rested on. As to his *hope*, alas, how poor a one is it, which terminates wholly, like his, in the wish for the company and conversation of *men*, and of *poets* too, who, whatever may be said of their ingenuity, defiled even heathenism itself (and even in the judgement of heathens, *Plato*, *Varro*, &c.) with the most monstrous absurdities and lies? Besides, poor man! wretched as this *hope* was, he seems to give it up, as it were, in the last desponding clause; "which of us has the better, is known to the Gods, but to no mortal man." If he had not doubted of immortality itself, he could not have doubted upon so obvious a matter. The only wonderful thing is, how he could support himself, as he did, by absolute conjectures, and face death with calmness, having no other comforter but despair. *Cicero's* apology for this, "that it was his principle to affirm nothing," does not, in my opinion, at all mend the matter. Perpetual doubt, or scepticism, is neither the friend of truth, nor the supporter of man.

The foundation of a Christian for eternal life is laid in everlasting certainty and righteousness, and not in himself, nor in his own sinful or death-deserving deeds. JEHOVAH-JESUS, the rock of ages, is the basis of his salvation, and the consummation of his glory. And as to his positive enjoyments and company hereafter, the inimitable description of the apostle throws into shade the poor expectation of the best of heathens: "Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church

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of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant."

I could oppose a thousand instances of divine dying to the philosophical exit of *Socrates*; but I will only take, for the present occasion, the departure of a very young minister, as it is related by his pious brother, a minister likewise, who *was present with him.*

"O (said he to his friends) that I could but let you know what I now feel! O that I could but show you what I now see! O that I could express the thousandth part of the sweetness, which I now find in Christ.—My friends, we little think what Christ *is worth* upon a death-bed. I would not for a world be to live any longer. The very thought of a possibility of a recovery makes me even tremble.—Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Death indeed has lost its terror. Death is nothing; I say, death is nothing through grace to me. I long to be with Christ. I long to die. O that glory! that unspeakable glory I behold! My heart is *full*, my heart is full. Did you but see what I see, you would all cry out with me, How long, dear Lord, how long! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!—O my friends, stand and wonder: come, look upon a dying man, and wonder. Was there ever a greater kindness! Was there ever more sensible manifestation of rich grace! O why me, Lord! why me! Sure, this is akin to heaven!—If this be dying, dying is sweet. Let no Christian be afraid of dying. Death is sweet to me! This bed is soft!

O that

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O that you did but see and feel what I do! Come, and behold a dying man more chearful than ever you saw any healthful man in the midst of his sweetest enjoyments. O why should any of you be dull, when I am so glad! This, this is the hour I have waited for. I want now but one thing, and it is a speedy lift into heaven.—Come, let us lift up our voices in praise: I with you, as long as my breath shall last, and when I have none, I shall do it better."

Thus departed to glory the Rev. Mr. *John Janeway*, in June 1657, and in the 24th year of his age.

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A MEMORIAL.

Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. xv. 57.

I MAKE no apology for presenting the reader with the inclosed Paper, which contains an account of the last sickness and death of a pious young person, written y her father.

Clifton, 31st May, 1804.

"IT has pleased God to take my dear daughter A——
"from me, and, as I have reason to believe, to his
"glory.

"She was always of a mild and patient disposition,
"which was rendered yet more amiable, after divine
"grace had wrought upon her heart to attend seriously
"to serious things.

"Her malady came upon her during the last winter.
"The cough, with which she was first afflicted, ap-
"pearing to be the effect of a cold, which a change of
"air might be the means of removing, she was removed
"to a neighbouring county, where she found no relief,
"but on the contrary grew gradually worse: about
"Christmas, therefore, she returned to London. Upon
"con-

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"consulting with an eminent physician, he appeared "not to consider her in any danger, at least not for some "time; but her cough continued, and at length so in- "creased, that my family became anxiously alarmed. We "proposed to remove her to Clifton; but the physician "objected to the season of the year, and observed, that "the sharp air at that place, and the journey during win- "ter, with change of beds, rooms, &c. would certainly "prove more injurious, than her warm confinement "could be in town. On the 2d of May, when the weather "began to be mild, we set out for Clifton, and, in the "course of twelve days, in which we rested often and "went only one stage in a day, (the first day excepted) "on account of her weakness, we arrived there; though "with great pain and difficulty to my poor daughter.

"Upon the road, she expressed her apprehensions of "the consequence, and seemed to be preparing her "mind for the solemn event, which was shortly to come "to pass. I was fully sensible of her case; and my "conversations and prayers with her were continually "directed, with all the tenderness in my power, to lift "up her views to the life immortal, as one who was "soon to have done with all earthly things. She fre- "quently told her maid, that she had no expectation "of remaining in this world; but was desirous of going "to Clifton, that she might not give her mother and "sisters the trouble and anguish of seeing her die at "home.

"The patience and resignation, which God gave her "through her illness, were very extraordinary. She "appeared to be in the utmost submission to the divine "will;

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" will; nor did a murmuring or discontented word upon " occasions, some of which were trying indeed, escape " her lips.

" After our arrival at Clifton, she declined apace. " A visible alteration appeared almost every day. Still " her calmness, and sometimes chearfulness, never for- " sook her. She was comforted outwardly with the " presence and conversation of her affectionate friends, " and particularly of her brother, whom she tenderly " loved, and who spent *much time with her* in reading, " &c. as she was able to bear it: and she seemed in- " wardly tranquil and supported by the goodness of " God, in the views of approaching death and eternity.

" On the 21th of May, the third morning before her " departure, upon my coming into the chamber, and " being left alone, she said to me, with a peculiar " chearfulness of spirit; " Surely, papa, I cannot ex- " press to you the great comfort I have enjoyed, during " much of this last night, from the impression of several " texts of scripture upon my heart, and particularly that " one, where the prophet exhorts us to turn to the Lord " and to say; *Take away all iniquity, and receive us* " *graciously;* and where the Lord answers; *I will heal* " *their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger* " *is turned away.** O it was great comfort indeed!"— " I expressed my satisfaction, and endeavoured to show, " how faithful and true the Lord is to all his promises, " and that, trusting in him, she would never be con- " founded or forsaken. The promises were constantly " made to faith. All our Lord's miracles were done in " consequence of faith in him. And he himself has " told

* Hos. xiv.

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" told us, that *all things are possible to him that believeth.* " *He is faithful,* and cannot be otherwise, *who hath* " *promised.*

" I then read to her the 54th and 55th Chapters of " Isaiah, and observed, as I went along, among other " points, that the exceeding great and precious promises, " made therein to the church at large, belonged also, " specially and particularly, to every individual mem- " ber, even as though he or she were mentioned by " *name;* for they were sure to *all* the seed, to *every* " *one,* who came unto God through Christ, and lived " upon his truth. She answered; " These are exceed- " ing great and precious promises indeed; and I have " no dependence but upon the Lord's faithfulness to " make them good through Christ to my soul." She " also expressed, with great thankfulness of spirit, her " deep sense of the grace and goodness of the Lord to- " wards her in a thousand respects; but, above all, in " the things which pertained to her salvation.

" This interview was the more interesting to me, as " my daughter was naturally of a diffident and retired " turn of mind, which seemed rather to have increased " after her first serious impressions, and which naturally " induced her not to say much concerning herself. She " had used some remarkable expressions to the pious " nurse who attended her, the day before; and she now " repeated one in particular to myself, in which she " wished to know; " What was the necessary depth of " conviction of sin, as she had never experienced that " pungent remorse, which some good people had men- " tioned, upon their first awakenings, about their souls.

" She

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" She was, therefore, uneasy at times, lest she should
" have been mistaken, and not truly brought to God."
" I observed to her, that the *use* of these convictions was,
" to bring the minds of men to an *entire dependence* upon
" Christ for their *whole* salvation, and to cut them off
" from all false and carnal reliances; that gross sinners,
" who had been long trained in habits of iniquity, or
" self-righteous persons, who had firmly rested their
" hopes upon themselves and their own will, wisdom,
" and goodness, were usually the people who were thus
" visited of God by the severe application of his holy
" law upon their consciences; because it was apparently
" necessary to bring them fully from sin and delusion;
" that sometimes God had thus more than usual visited
" those, who were called to be ministers, and conse-
" quently messengers of grace to others, in order to
" enable them to speak to the hearts of those under trials
" and temptations from their own experience; but that,
" upon the whole, when any soul was truly convinced of
" the evil of sin, of the impossibility of removing either
" its guilt or power but by coming to Christ, and of the
" absolute necessity of resting every hope upon him for
" godliness here and life hereafter; the *great object* was
" obtained. If therefore she could say from her heart,
" that Christ was *all her salvation* and *all her desire*, and
" renounced every other hope or plea but his precious
" blood and righteousness for acceptance with God;
" doubtless God would be as good as his word to her,
" and that, *through his very faithfulness*, she *must* be
" saved. With this and much more, she seemed to be
" comforted.

" On

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"On the 25th in the morning, when I came to her "chamber, I found her much afflicted with the soreness "of her throat, which had been increasing for several "days, but was now become so very severe, that she "was not able to receive food, and therefore lived only "upon the cordial draughts sent her by the apothecary. "Her fever was high as usual. She seemed also to be "again harrassed at times with doubts and fears respecting "her eternal state; but these I considered as suggestions "from the enemy, heightened by the exacerbations of "her disorder, and her decreasing powers to struggle "with them, or even for life itself. I suggested to her "various consolatory passages of scripture, as they "occurred to me, or as she was able to attend to them. "She earnestly requested my prayers: "Do, my dear "papa, do pray for me,"—"I do, my dear child, I do. "I am every hour, and almost continually praying for "you: I shall not cease to do so. All your friends, and "many good people besides, are praying for you, and "intreating, that you may be supported and blessed." —"They and you are very kind to me: I thank, I thank "you all."

"O how hard and trying is the struggle between life "and death! I could not but retire, and pray, that the "Lord would be pleased to abate the anguish of her "sufferings, or increase her faith and patience to honor "him in bearing them.

"At another time in this day, she expressed much "concern upon account of her drowsiness, which "hindered her from thinking and praying as she desired. "I requested her not to be perplexed upon that account,

"and

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" and assured her, that all her friends, as well as myself, " were thinking of and praying for her; and, more than " all, that though she could not now think much of " Christ, he was thinking of her, and was careful to " do better for her than she herself could either ask or " think.—With these reflections, she seemed to muse " and to be comforted.

" About six o'clock, on the 26th, in the morning, " she desired that I might be called. When I came to " her, I found that she *had gone through* a very bad and " distressing night of sickness and pain.—She desired me " to kiss her; and, as I bowed down, she clung about " my neck with her poor withered arm, and, pressing " her lips upon mine for a considerable time, she most " affectionately embraced and kissed me. She then said; " O my papa, pray for me!—I am going to die: but I " am resigned, and, I think, I can say, that I am en- " tirely and truly resigned, to the Lord's will, and trust " that I am ready to receive what he has appointed and " prepared for me."—" I do not cease to pray for you, " my dearest child: I cannot cease. But you have a " better intercessor than your poor father, even the Lord " Jesus Christ, who is touched with the feeling of our " infirmities, and who is now, I doubt not, pleading for " you and for me before the throne of God. He cannot " ask in vain. A crown of righteousness he hath pre- " pared for them that love him; and be assured, that he " hath prepared one, my dear child, for *you, even for* " *you.*" With suggestions of this kind, I endeavored to " fill her thoughts. She seemed to ponder upon them " for a time in calmness of spirit; but her bodily pains " again

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"again coming on, and the help of her nurse being re-
"quired, I left the room.

"Returning afterwards, upon some remission of her
"pains, I took occasion to mention the office of Christ,
"as the great Mediator and High Priest of our profes-
"sion, who never left his people in their extremities,
"but had recorded for them his peculiar blessing, which
"I would repeat to her. I then, lifting up my hands
"over her, and, with all the emphasis of affection,
"pronounced the words enjoined to be used by the re-
"presentatives of the great High Priest for the Church
"upon earth. Numb. vi. 24, 25, 26. *The Lord bless*
"*thee, and keep thee! The Lord make his face shine upon*
"*thee, and be gracious unto thee! The Lord lift up his*
"*countenance upon thee, and give thee peace!*—I con-
"cluded, by desiring her to look to her Saviour, that
"great Physician of the soul, who taketh away all our
"iniquities, who healeth all our infirmities, who giveth
"life and peace for evermore.—As well as she was able,
"she gave her assent; and I am persuaded it was the
"gracious assent of faith and hope.

"On the 27th, I was called up about three o'clock,
"and was informed, that she was dying. I found her
"panting in the last agonies. "I am dying (said she)
"my dear father! O pray for me!" She appeared to be
"perplexed about the want of assurance, and with
"doubts and fears. She was anxious to know *her par-*
"*ticular* safety with more certainty. This was the work
"of the enemy, who was endeavoring to harrass to the
"last, what he must soon cease to harrass for ever.
"Her pious nurse, as well as myself, at suitable intervals,
"repeated

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" repeated the promises of God in her case, and his " loving assurances of free pardon and tender mercy to " all that came to him, simply trusting in Christ Jesus. " She then became more tranquil and composed: but " said no more, the agonies increasing upon her, and " taking away the powers of speech. I poured out my " prayers, that " the enemy might be made *still as a* " *stone, while this ransomed one passed over* the Jordan " of death to her everlasting inheritance. She soon " afterwards fell into a *doze, and continued so* for some " time, till, with a long deep sigh, she finished her " course, and entered, I trust, into the joy of her Lord."

THE END.

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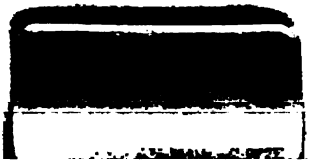

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